A Journal to Rome & Back

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE OPENING of the ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL

TO ROME AND BACK.

A WINTER JOURNEY

TO

ROME AND BACK,

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF THE OPENING

OF THE

ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL,

AND GLANCES AT

MILAN, FLORENCE, NAPLES, POMPEII, AND VENICE.

By WILLIAM EVILL.

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1870.

TO

CHARLES KENT,

WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP IN

The Eternal City

CONTRIBUTED SO LARGELY TO THE INTEREST

AND THE ENJOYMENT OF

THE AUTHOR'S VISIT,

AND WHOSE READY PERMISSION THAT THESE PAGES SHOULD

BE ASSOCIATED WITH HIS NAME

GIVES EVIDENCE OF

HIS LIBERALITY AS A CATHOLIC,

AND IS AT ONCE THE SEAL AND THE EXPLANATION OF

A LONG AND HAPPY FRIENDSHIP,

This Book

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

WHEN the author left home, nothing was further from his thoughts than to make his journey the subject of a published narrative. It was undertaken solely for health and recreation; but such were the interest and variety of the places he visited and of the scenes he witnessed, and so exceptionally favoured was he in the general circumstances of his tour, that, having made very copious and careful notes of his experiences and impressions, he was induced, on his return, to weave them into a continuous narrative for delivery in the form of lectures, for the benefit of a local charity.

These lectures were originally delivered before a circle of friends; but, in consequence of the interest that they excited and the favour with which they were received, the author has been prevailed upon to give them a wider publicity, and, in the form of the present volume, to introduce them, as it were, to a larger audience. It should further be stated that the object

of their publication is to assist the Building Fund of St. Saviour's Church, Battersea Park.

Accuracy of description, whether of scenery, cities, or ceremonies, is what the author has principally aimed at, and, his sketches having been chiefly written at the time and on the spot, their truthfulness may be relied upon. Indeed he has preferred, in nearly every instance, to give them *verbatim*, feeling that whatever might be their literary shortcomings, any attempt to recast them would be at the sacrifice of their freshness and faithfulness.

In his references to the services and worship of the Church of Rome, it has been the author's wish to avoid every expression that could be personally offensive to members of that Communion—some of whom he numbers amongst his dearest friends—but he has not hesitated to give free and honest utterance to the impressions made upon him, as a Protestant, in, for the first time, witnessing the ceremonials and familiarizing himself with the practices of that Church, in their full and unfettered development at the heart and centre of Romanism itself.

LONDON, *May*, 1870.

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TO ROME AND BACK.

CHAPTER I.

Through France to Strasburg — Strasburg Cathedral and clock — The Falls of the Rhine — An adventure — Warning to winter travellers — Rough quarters — The Via Mala — Crossing the Splügen — Luggage examination — Chiavenna.

I LEFT London on Wednesday evening, Nov. 24. It was like going off in a fog for all that I knew either of the route I was likely to take, or of the chance of reaching my destination; that destination being the Eternal City, and the route some way across the Alps.

I had intended to sleep at Dover, but the fineness of the night tempted me to cross to Calais, and once on the other side of the Channel, I thought I would push on for Paris, which I reached at 7.35 next morning, after as comfortable a journey as a non-smoker, conversationally inclined, and understanding little of any language but his own, could possibly make, shut up for eight hours with a couple of Greeks and a German, all smoking hard.

Arrived in Paris, I found that the morning mail for Basle had left; so I resolved to get to Switzerland *viâ* Strasburg, and hurried at once to the Strasburg station. Time was afforded me for a brief breakfast at a restaurant, and a dusty sort of meal it was, for a *garçon* was

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sweeping out the place; but still I had company, for there was the inevitable lady, with the velvet bodice and the apron with its interminable pockets, sitting behind the little desk even at that early hour (do these ladies sleep there, I wonder?); and I remember, too, that before I left I had the further curious companionship of a Sister of Mercy and a pointer dog. Speculation as to the occasion of *their* coming together occupied me for the first hour or so of my journey; and you want something of the kind to occupy your thoughts, for a railway run through this part of France is about the most tedious thing I know—expanse after expanse of dreary plains, ever beginning, never ending. Now and then, seemingly a long way from everywhere, and always approached through straight dismal avenues of poplar, you come on a village with its yellow plaster church and everlastingly tinkling bell; its one round extinguisher-capped tower, and its little white castellated steep-roofed houses, all shutters and stucco, with weedy, ragged patches of garden, and square plots of field, where women are working, with here and there a man in a blue frock, like a butcher, busy on a wall. Then there are no hedges, and the land being subdivided into small plots of brown, and green, and red, and yellow, you can liken it to nothing but a patchwork counterpane. There is nothing beautiful or picturesque in this part of France.

It was a wearisome journey. Driven by the monotony outside to the contemplation of my fellow passengers, all French and Germans, I remember wondering

why foreigners on their travels always seem to have shaved the day before yesterday, and to have had their hair cut this morning; and I also remember that at every station at which we stopped I asked myself the further question—if a waiting-room and a buffet can be made to look so neat and smart and tasty by the judicious use of a few yards of crimson dimity, and a few feet of looking-glass, why on earth should we stand the depressing unsightliness of our own stations any longer?

Arrived at Strasburg, after twenty-three hours' continuous travelling, I was glad indeed of rest and refreshment at that comfortable establishment—the Hôtel de Paris.

Of Strasburg I need pause to say little. It is a fine, well-ordered, strongly-fortified city, but like most continental towns, its chief attraction centres in the cathedral, which is one of the finest specimens of the Gothic style in Europe. A part of it is very old, being attributed to the time of Charlemagne. Two lofty steeples were included in its original design, but only one has been completed. This is a stupendous structure, consisting of a massive square tower, rising far above the roof of the cathedral, and carrying four lighter towers, which enclose an open winding staircase, and are surmounted by a fairylike spire of most delicate fretwork, the top of which rises 140 feet higher than St. Paul's. On the summit of the unfinished tower a considerable house is built, and you there meet with quite a town life, for on the leads of the roof you see benches and tables for refreshments, and a garden with trees and

flowers growing in it—an aërial retreat much resorted to in summer by the Strasburgians.

The interior of the cathedral, with its long aisles, massive towering pillars, and superb rose window, glowing with the richest colours, is very imposing. As an illustration of the vastness of the structure, I may mention that this window is 48 feet in diameter; and such is its height from the floor, that beneath its crown, our York Minster, towers and all, might stand.

The great attraction of the cathedral, however, is its clock, and I took care to be there at noon, the time at which it goes through its performances. It is certainly a marvellous piece of mechanism, as it ought to be, seeing that it took an ingenious man nearly his whole lifetime to design and construct. It tells you everything you don't want to know—all about the equinoxes, and when the next spring-tides are due, and the changes in the moon, and something very important about Jupiter's satellites. I believe it does also tell you the time of the day, but you had better make sure of that by your own watch. However, its chief feature is the mid-day procession. As twelve o'clock strikes, the twelve apostles, one after another, sally out of a little door, and pass before a figure, supposed to represent our Lord, before whom they all turn short round with a jerk, and give a most comical bow. When St. Peter appears, a cock on the top of the clock flaps its wings and crows three times—the oddity of the thing, however, is that the bird stretching its neck at the top of the clock doesn't seem to have the least connection with the

crow that comes from a long way down. There is always a crowd to see the performance, as, besides travellers, the market-people and shopkeepers come in scores to witness it, the clock being the great pride of the city.

By this time I had made up my mind to cross the Alps by the Via Mala and the Splügen Pass, and to take Schaffhausen on my way, so as to see the Falls of the Rhine. What befel me at the Falls I will now recount as a warning to winter travellers in search of the picturesque.

Learning from Murray, when "en route" for Schaffhausen, that Neuhausen, three or four miles short of Schaffhausen, was the right station for the Falls, and that at this place there was the Schweizer Hof, "one of the best hotels in Switzerland," I thought I could not do better than stop there, and accordingly did so, reaching it between ten and eleven at night. It was almost pitch dark, no one got out at the station but myself, and on the platform there was one porter, with a lantern. When I named the hotel he shook his head violently, and began to jabber. I didn't understand a word, but seeing a light in the window of a large building not far off, the outline of which I could just discern against the sky, I pointed resolutely to it, whereupon the porter shouldered my portmanteau, and, lantern in hand, we made for this light. It was from a window on the ground floor, and on reaching it we saw a woman inside reading by a lamp. The porter tapped, the female came to the window, and between the two there passed some noisy parleying and gesticulation, which presently ended in

the porter grumpily putting down my luggage, and going back to the station with his lantern, and the woman leaving the room with her lamp. I was puzzled, but concluded that she had only gone away for the purpose of letting me in, and that in a few minutes I should be received by the bowing landlord of this famed hotel, and a host of attendants, all eager to supply my wants. I waited patiently for some time, but there was no sound from within; all was painfully silent, the stillness being only broken by the distant roar of the Falls. Getting a little fidgetty at last, I began tapping at the window myself; this brought the woman back—but not to let me in. She walked to the window, looked angrily at me, shook her head, blew out her lamp, and shut the shutters in my face! The porter had gone away; the station lights were all put out, for mine was the last train either way, and here was I, standing alone in a road in almost pitch darkness, with my luggage heaped about me—I didn't know where, except that it was as nearly as possible in the centre of Europe—and with the apparent certainty of having for one night a taste of a tramp's life, and of sleeping under a hedge. What was to be done? I thought of groping my way about in search of an outhouse and a truss of straw, but it was too dark to move, I might break my neck at any moment; so, thinking that a disturber of the public peace (if there was any public to disturb) would surely be provided for in some fashion, I began to halloo. After continuous shouting a light appeared at the station; by its aid I managed to grope my way back, and there was the station

master, whose preparations for rest I had apparently disturbed, and who, happily, could talk French. I explained my dilemma, and he then told me with a shrug and a grin that the hotel was "fermé pour l'hiver," and that this woman was its only occupant. He declined to take me in at the station, and could only advise me to walk to the neighbouring village at the head of the Falls. He hunted up the porter to carry my luggage, and we presently trudged off towards some lights that I could see in the distance twinkling above some masses of dim whitish mist, whence the roaring came, and which I concluded were the Falls.

Arrived at the village, we entered a queer sort of house, climbed some steps, opened a door, and there were half-a-dozen German boors drinking, smoking, card playing, and furiously quarrelling. The landlord, reeking with tobacco and garlic, and all abominations, was found. The porter explained my wants to him; and evidently excited at the idea of a customer with real luggage, he called his wife, and they promised by signs to accommodate me as best they could. Here then, in this German village pot-house, instead of in "one of the best hotels in Switzerland," I had to pass the night! Remembering, however, my anticipations a short hour ago, of having to sleep in a ditch, I felt thankful for shelter anywhere.

By earliest daylight I was up and out at the Falls—very magnificent of course, and capitally described by Murray; but it was pouring in torrents, and I was tired, shaky, and famished; besides which I owed the

Falls a little grudge for last night's inhospitality, having dreamt that the woman who shut the shutter in my face was no other than the Spirit of the Rhine herself.

After a rough primitive sort of breakfast, and securing the services of a peasant, as porter for my luggage, I crossed over to the Dachsen station, a mile or so distant, and took the first train to Chur, the extreme limit of the Swiss railways, and where the Splügen route begins; this place I reached about eight that evening. There is a large and most comfortable hotel at Chur, with accommodation for 300, but there were only four guests in the house besides myself, so few are the travellers by this route in winter.

Next morning I was called at four, and by five o'clock had started in the diligence for the Via Mala, "en route" for the Splügen Pass. I had half the coupé, my companion being a German Swiss, who didn't know a word of English. It rained as we started, and we rambled on in the dark, cold and dismal enough; but with the rising sun came a glorious change; the mist passed away, and the day broke magnificently, so that the beauties of this marvellous defile were seen to perfection.

The day was sparkling as crystal—the bluest sky and the clearest air—the snow was not only crowning the heights as in summer, but lying about in the shadows half-way down the sides of the glen, melting away in the bright sunlight; and what greatly added to the charm, the autumn tints were still colouring the woods, the golden trees, freighted with their burden of ice, filling the eye with beauty. For grandeur and sublimity

the scenery of the Verlohrenes Loch, or "Lost Gulf," at Via Mala, is unsurpassed in Europe, and to have seen it as I saw it that day is a memory for life. The chasm is 5 miles long, and in some places its walls of slate and limestone are 1600 feet high in one perpendicular line, here and there meeting within 20 yards. Its exquisitely tinted rocky sides are not entirely bare, but decorated with masses of fir and pine, their summits either crested with woods or rising in jagged peaks of snow, shining crisp and bright and sharp against the deep blue above. Mystic waterfalls of ice, frozen cascades held captive in mid-air, glistened and flashed and sparkled like jewels in the sunbeams; for already had Winter

> "Torn the cataracts from the hills,
> And they clanked at his girdle like manacles."

The road has been formed by blasting a notch, as it were, in the side of the rock. For a long distance it is overhung by a solid canopy, being hollowed out of the perpendicular wall. It is 400 or 500 feet above the bottom of the glen, and gazing down you see beneath you huge masses of rock that, arrested in their descent, are in places suspended in mid air, jammed in between the sides of the chasm. These boulders, clothed with a mossy verdure—the growth of centuries—are most picturesque and beautiful objects, even trees sprouting from their crevices, and masking their barrenness with rich and lovely foliage. At the bottom of all, threading its silvery way through the gorge, you see the infant Rhine, the most exquisitely clear and sparkling of rivulets,

bounding and frolicking along its rocky bed, as playful in its infancy as we in ours. The views up and down the glen as it winds its way for miles, each bend discovering new combinations of beauty, are simply bewildering; and to me, fresh within a few hours from the smoke and fog of London, it seemed a sudden transport into a realm of enchantment.

Leaving the Via Mala, we entered the valley of Schams, and then the Rofla Ravine, a minor Via Mala, through which the Rhine dashes and leaps and tumbles in a series of cascades, all beautiful beyond expression. On quitting the gorge, the snow-fields of the Einshorn and the landscape of the Rheinwaldthal burst into view, and by midday we reached the village of Splügen, close upon 5000 feet high. Here was a decent hotel, with a first-rate *salle*, a smart Parisian garçon, a piano, an elaborately painted ceiling, engravings and paintings—and all this at an elevation half as high again as Snowdon. We had, too, a capital *table d'hôte;* and I remember being struck with some wonderful biscuits that were served to us, stamped with scriptural subjects—the Crucifixion, the scene in the manger, and the Ascension—and regarding them as a kind of queer intimation of our approach to the land of religious art.

As the snow was so thick we had to proceed in sleighs, and to reach the summit of the pass we still had to go, by a zigzag road, another 2000 feet. This was a pleasant novelty; each sleigh carries two, with standing room behind for the driver—the horses, however, literally require no driving, so well do they know

the road and their business. I climbed most of this zigzag road by short cuts, for it was extremely cold, and being virtually alone I could abandon myself to the emotions awakened by the scene. It was one of surpassing and almost oppressive sublimity. A cathedral silence reigned amidst the vast icy solitudes around; the sky was perfectly clear and of the deepest blue; no cloud was to be seen, but a few wreaths of mist festooning the mountains, and above which the snow summits, towering in fantastic pinnacles, shone as seraphs' wings might shine, bright and dazzling in the sun.

About three we reached the frontier stone, just 7000 feet high, and entered Italy. Curiously there was a dark cloud in the far-distant Italian horizon, but underneath that cloud, and farther in the distance still, there was a bright and glorious streak of light. This was my first view of an Italian sky—not a fancy, but the actual scene before me—and the thought occurred to me—"Does that light beyond the cloud forecast the future of the sunny land?" The descent through the Lira valley was very beautiful; the chestnut forests, even now in November, making exquisite contrast with the rugged desolation of the "icy halls" towering above them. The road here is a marvel of engineering, skirting a zigzag of continuous precipices for miles.

At the tiny village of Campo Dolcino, the first frontier station, we were stopped for an examination of our luggage. It was odd to witness the inspection of the packages; one, I remember, belonging to a Swiss work-

man—a huge box—was broken open, and I made a note of its contents; they consisted of some iron stove-doors, a nightcap, some brass wire, a pair of boots, a blue shirt, some bronze mouldings, bits of cheese, a sort of King Neptune's crown, and a pair of trowsers! What in the world brought all these into the same box was the puzzle; and to see the poor fellow's dismay at being shown something that was contraband—I forget whether it was the stove-doors or the cheese—was pitiable.

Chiavenna, our halting-place for the night, was reached soon after seven; and after fourteen hours' travelling I was glad indeed of rest. Our hotel was a cold, gaunt, ghostlike place, all courtyard, dirty stone staircases, gaudy ceilings and black stoves with no fire in them. The furniture in my huge bedroom consisted of an enormous fireless stove, with enough pipe about it to heat a small Crystal Palace, a sofa that might accommodate a boarding-school, and a bed that Tom Thumb might have grumbled at; but even had it been larger it would have been all the same to me. Not five minutes' rest did I have that night, and when called at two I was wide awake. I shall not forget my first Italian entomological experiences.

CHAPTER II.

Night posting — Sunrise on Lake Como — First Italian impressions — Milan Cathedral — St. Carlo Borromeo — View from the summit of the cathedral — My rare good fortune.

At half-past two I had to start for Colico, and having engaged a special conveyance the night before to take me right through, I consoled myself with the idea of having my sleeplessness atoned for by a three hours' nap in a snug post-chaise: when I came down I found that my conveyance was an open trap. It was a bitterly cold night, and I did not at all relish the idea of 20 miles of such exposure; in fact I didn't like the look of the whole affair: the driver was a brigandish, cut-throat looking sort of a fellow, one of a class that has not the best reputation in the world; and it was a strange, lonely road of which I knew nothing, and it was the dead of night; however, I started. There was a little light from a crescent moon, and I tried, like Mark Tapley, to be "jolly under creditable circumstances." After over an hour's bitter and dreary drive, the fellow turned into a sort of yard, with a rambling house belonging to it, and going to an out-house, he pulled out another open chaise, and motioned me to get out. Thinking he wanted merely an exchange of phaetons, from something being wrong with mine, I

obeyed; he transferred my traps to the second phaeton, and I then got in. On this, without a word of explanation, he quietly went off—bolted—leaving me sitting alone in the chaise with no horse in it, nobody near me, or giving signs of coming; all this at three o'clock on a November morning, somewhere in the Alps, though I hadn't the least idea where; and this happening to me, a quiet paterfamilias, who only three nights ago was snug at home, 1000 miles away! I have no idea how long I remained in this ridiculous position; but not in the least comprehending the meaning of it, my perplexity and alarm at last became considerable. However, after a while a light appeared at a window, and presently another brigand turned out, rubbing his eyes and leading a horse. I then understood all about it. The first fellow had decided, though against our agreement, not to go the whole journey, and, having arrived at the end of the first stage, had transferred me to another carriage and then had gone home, leaving me to his successor—it was a change of brigands, trap, horse, and all! I was really thankful however when, about six o'clock, Colico was safely reached.

Here it is that the steamer starts for Como; it was lying alongside a little jetty, and I went at once on board. All was quiet, the preparations for departure not having commenced, so I could pace the deck in solitude and survey the scene around me. It was an exquisite night, clear, soft, and still. The horned moon, though low in the horizon, made the wonderful panorama of snow-peaks around me glisten like silver. It was perfect starlight too, the vault above me quivering

with diamonds; not a breath was stirring. I recalled Shelley's description of such a night—

> . . . . "The balmiest sigh
> Which vernal zephyrs breathe in angels' ears
> Were discord to the speaking quietude
> That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon vault,
> Studded with stars unutterably bright,
> Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls,
> Seems like a canopy which love has spread
> To curtain her sleeping world."

I was entranced by the magic and witchery of the scene and hour. The mountain outline at the head of Como is renowned for its beauty, and never can I forget its first view by that soft and brilliant moonlight. But how can I describe the scene of enchantment that followed, as we steamed down the lake and day began to dawn? The sunrise was in itself most exquisite; but to see peak after peak catch the golden beams and burst into flame, till the whole western range seemed crested and pinnacled with fire; to watch the crimson flush steal down from slope to slope, suffusing the mountain side with an effulgence scarcely surpassed by the radiant glories of the sunrise itself; to contrast with the brightness of the realms of ice and air above me the deep gloom of the glens and valleys bordering the lake: for long after night had been chased from the skies, it lingered in the world below; and then to mark, as we steamed on, the varied beauty of the shifting panorama and the gradual transformation of the whole scene as early dawn unfolded into bright and sparkling day—all this was rapture unspeakable, an excitement almost beyond endurance. What added greatly to the beauty of the

scene,—as in the Via Mala the day before,—the line of snow was much lower than in summer, and yet not so low as to cover or obscure the rich foliage bordering the lake, and still glowing with the warm tints of autumn.

The villages, towns, and mansions on the shores nestling in the woods, and jotted about the hills, are many of them gems of beauty. You see, sloping to the lake, terraced gardens festooned with creepers, planted with olive, cypress, and acacia, and ornamented with fountains and statuary; and in their midst, the daintiest summer-houses with delicate fantastic turrets, balconies, balustrades, and artistic bridges, all combining to make wonderful pictures—and such colour! They fresco many of the houses with diaper work, and paint the shutters, verandahs, and even chimneys in tints so choice and patterns so artistic, and the houses rise one above the other in such picturesque variety of grouping, that altogether this Lake of Como, as I saw it that sparkling morning, in its blended scenery of villa, garden, wooded slope, and gilded icy summit, surpassed anything I ever conceived in the way of beauty, and after a while I felt quite intoxicated and wild with the sense of it. I could not go below, grudging every moment away from the deck, and there I made my rough al fresco breakfast. Before the run was over we had a motley assemblage of passengers on board, gathered from the different landing places—some priests, of course, among them, for they are everywhere. I was greatly prepossessed with the Lombardians; compared with other foreigners they realize more our English ideas of ladies and gentle-

men. And what eyes and lashes the women and children have! I was attracted too by a home association, for every other Italian peasant you meet looks as if he ought to have a hand-organ, and I took it for granted, from his face and features, that the boy who brought me my coffee on deck had dormice in his pocket, and was going to play a hurdy-gurdy!

We reached Como at half-past ten, having been on the lake nearly five hours, and, wishing to push on, I proceeded at once to the Camerlata station, distant about two miles, and took train to Milan, which under a blue and cloudless sky (for the heavens were still true to their Italian reputation) I reached a little after noon.

Although I had been on the wing since two o'clock that morning, I was in no mood for rest, so after a hasty lunch, in spite of the enticements of a most luxurious hotel—the Hôtel de la Ville, on the Corso—I sallied forth to visit the central attraction of Milan, its far-famed cathedral.

If I had been happy in my first view of the scenery of Italy, I was equally so in my introduction to her architecture. What Como is to all other lakes, Milan Cathedral is to all other churches, unrivalled and supreme. Try to picture a building twice the size of Westminster Abbey, solid white marble from basement to roof; its towering walls rich with elaborate tracery and sculpture; its flying buttresses fringed with a fretwork of delicate carving; the roof itself a perfect forest of clustering turrets and pinnacles, out of the midst of which rises a beautiful lantern tower, carrying a spire

of such delicacy and fairy lightness that it seems to fade into the sky. Remember, too, that on each point and pinnacle of this elaborate structure there is a marble statue glistening in the sun, the spire itself being crowned by a snow-white image of the Virgin. The air above you seems to swarm with life, and as you gaze up at those radiant forms gleaming in the blue, you might fancy them to be a band of fluttering seraphs who had just alighted from the skies. Milan Cathedral, as it burst upon me that sunny day, seemed rather the crystallized embodiment of some lovely dream of architecture than the actual workmanship of human hands.

It was commenced in 1386, but it is to the first Napoleon that its completion is due. In 1805 he issued a decree for the continuation of the work with vigour, and, assisted by the Austrian emperor, he completed the magnificent façade, and added a vast number of statues. Of these there are now said to be over seven thousand; most of them are by eminent men, and many are works of high merit. One of these—the only statue in Parian marble—is Canova's famous statue of Napoleon himself, bearing in his hand, instead of a sceptre, a lightning-conductor. Surely a touch of the sublime!

The interior of the cathedral is alike superb. As you enter the middle door, above which is a beautiful bas-relief of the Creation of Eve, you pass between two granite columns of colossal size—single blocks—supporting a lofty balcony. Nine enormous pointed arches extend along each side of the nave, separating it from the double aisles. These arches are supported by

gigantic clustering columns, of which groups of saints form the capitals. The mighty roof with its frescoed tracery is supported by no less than 160 marble columns, 77 feet high, and colossal statues are even niched round the springing of the central cupola, towering in the air above you. There are few chapels here; so that you can see the grand proportions and the exquisite symmetry of this stupendous pile to advantage. Two bronze pulpits of immense size, supported by uncouth bronze figures, are placed at the entrance of the semicircular choir, and over the high altar there is a bronze tabernacle, a masterpiece of elaborate workmanship. At the back of the choir is the celebrated but ghastly statue of St. Bartholomew, by Agrati. It represents the martyr newly flayed, with his skin drawn over his shoulders as a garment. Behind the high altar are the three gigantic windows of stained glass; the designs of these windows are of great interest, but it was by the general effect of their deep and solemn colouring that I was most impressed. The prevailing tints are ruby and dark blue, and the mellow light streaming in through this rich medium, flecking the antique shrines and studding the marble floor with gems, was indescribably grand. This was a favourite resort of poor Shelley, who used to sit and read by the hour in the midst of this golden gloom—"a quiet spot" where his gentle persecuted spirit could find peace. Surely it was more than mere poetic sentiment that drove this much-misunderstood man from the busy outside world to seek the calm and quiet of this cathedral seclusion.

Beneath the grand altar is an octagonal chapel, containing the body of San Carlo Borromeo. This chapel is most gorgeously ornamented: on the panels around are richly-chased silver bas-reliefs, representing the principal events in the life of the saint. Above the altar his mummied remains, pontifically robed and sparkling with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other costly gems, are dimly visible through the sides of a rock-crystal sarcophagus. The face is exposed, but is much disfigured, and the poor mouldering lifeless dust forms a startling and ghastly contrast with the glittering and the flashing of the costly jewels and the rich vestments around. I thought of Arnold s description of Belshazzar:—

> "Crownless and sceptreless, Belshazzar lay,
> A robe of purple o'er a form of clay."

What though the flesh is fast crumbling away? The memory of this good man will live for ever. In the Roman calendar there is no nobler name. His life of sweet humility, active and courageous philanthropy, and unselfish devotedness was never surpassed in the history of any Church. Living at a time when monstrous abuses had crept into the Roman Church, he laboured assiduously at their removal, neither disheartened by opposition, intimidated by threats, nor deterred by danger. He narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of a religious order whose practices he had condemned; but he undauntedly pursued his course. He established hospitals—seminaries—colleges—asylums. At the time of the great plague his devotedness was heroic. Where the shafts of death were falling thickest, there was to be found the good archbishop, with his

own hands ministering to the dying and assisting in burying the dead, and sparing neither fatigue nor expense in doing his utmost to mitigate the horrors of the terrible scourge. With princely means, his benevolence was unbounded; and with an establishment befitting his rank, but kept up only at the express wish of the Pope, his habits were of the most simple and even austere character: bread and water constituting his humble daily fare. The inscription over his tomb, dictated by himself, attests the modesty and humility of his character. Amid the crimes that disfigure the page of even ecclesiastical history, it is delightful to contemplate the career and character of the sainted Archbishop of Milan.

As you wind slowly up the staircase leading to the roof, and look through the loopholes, you discover carvings and niches, and statues, hidden away in every corner of the structure. The roof is composed of slabs of marble, so beautifully fitted together that it looks like a solid block. You walk about it as in a vast sculpture gallery, its perfect cleanliness and glistening whiteness bearing striking testimony to the crystal purity of the Italian sky. It is true that a band of men is constantly employed in cleaning the edifice, but only once in fifteen years can they complete the circle of the work. Ascending above the roof, you reach the octagonal platform of the cupola, when a view of surprising magnificence bursts upon you. Tennyson writes—

> "I climbed the roofs at break of day;
> Sun-smitten Alps before me lay;
> I stood amongst the silent statues,
> And statued pinnacles, mute as they."

Immediately at your feet you see what has been likened to "a city in the air"—the glittering cathedral, with its countless pinnacles and spires and swarming statues. Round you is the beautiful city of Milan itself, with its churches, palaces, and noble streets thronged with the busy crowd; beyond its walls the rich plain of Lombardy, with its gardens, vineyards, and groves of olives, and studded with villages and towers: and bounding all, in a sweep of green and purple and white, the magnificent panorama of the Alps and Apennines. This day the entire circle of mountains was perfectly distinct; the first time that it had been so—as I afterwards heard—for seven months. There were the purple Apennines fading away in the distant southern horizon, and in the north the whole Alpine chain from Savoy to the Tyrol was clear and crisp against the deep-blue sky. Every well-known summit could be distinctly defined—Mont Cenis, Mont Blanc, St. Bernard, Monte Rosa, the Fletschhorn, the Simplon, the Jung Frau, St. Gothard, the Splügen—all there, not a dream of mountains, a mere lovely flitting impalpable vision, but a majestic reality, a zone of beautiful undulating summits, all covered with a canopy of snow, so pure, so stainless, and so unutterably bright, that you might believe them to be the Elysian Fields rising above the horizon's verge.

> "How faintly flushed, how phantom fair,
> Was Monte Rosa hanging there;
> A thousand shadowy pencilled valleys,
> And snowy dells in a golden air."

When I descended into the cathedral the sun was

setting, and the golden rays streaming in through the coloured windows flooded the church with glory. It was a grand and dazzling climax to this most memorable day. The sun as it rose that morning found me amidst Alpine snows, and crimsoned them into warmth and beauty—its after-light tracked me through the day with an undying radiance, and its setting rays shed a last lingering lustre round me as they left me in God's temple. I had indeed been peculiarly favoured, it having been my lot to crowd into a little over twenty-four hours the finest glen and mountain scene, the finest lake scene both by moonlight and by sunrise, the finest cathedral, and the finest panoramic view, in Europe, and all seen to absolute perfection.

A striking illustration of my good fortune was afforded me that evening. At the *table d'hôte* I met an American just in from Paris, *viâ* the Mont Cenis route (Mount Ceniss, he called it), and he informed me that he and seventy others had been detained on the mountain for three days and nights, snowed up by a tournade, in a châlet, where there was scarcely standing-room for the party. It had been a time of misery and half starvation, for there was no lying down and sleeping, and the only fare was black bread, sour wine, and one sheep that a forester managed to kill. *Seventy* people! Remembering that when *en route* for Paris I was hesitating between the Splügen and the Mont Cenis pass, and that had I selected the latter I should probably have been one of the party, I did indeed feel thankful for my escape.

CHAPTER III.

Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper'—The Biblioteca Ambrosiana—General features of Milan—A Yankee companion—Florence—The Uffizi and Pitti galleries—The Duomo and Giotto's campanile—Santa Croce—Church of Lorenzo—Nooks and corners.

On the following morning, after another visit to the cathedral, I set early to work to see the city and its lions. The guide I engaged was a most superior and intelligent fellow, speaking capital English. He had been one of Garibaldi's captains, commanded one of his regiments in Sicily, and was with him when he entered Naples in triumph. He was very free and outspoken about the present state of things in this country. Of course I had to make allowance for his Garibaldian sympathies, but from his statement I gathered that every one is looking and longing for change; that the priests are becoming increasingly unpopular, and that the Italians will never be satisfied till they have Rome for their capital.

My first visit was to that great artistic attraction of Milan, Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated fresco of 'The Last Supper.' It is in the old refectory of the Dominican convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, now used

as a barrack. In its grouping, composition, and general conception, this masterpiece is of course as attractive as ever, and repays the closest and most observant study; but damp, neglect, and exposure have greatly destroyed its beauty, and, like the wrinkled face of age, it is blurred, and seared, and worn "by time's effacing fingers," and is now a mere wreck of art. It has suffered, too, from perpetual renovation by inferior artists, and also from wanton injury, a door having been cut through it by Napoleon's soldiers. Leonardo reserved the painting of the head of Christ until the last, but shrank abashed, even then, from what he considered the impiousness of any attempt to depict Incarnate Deity, and would do no more than merely faintly outline the features; thus the picture remained until 250 years after his death, when Bellotti, in a less reverent spirit, ventured to paint in the face. It is further narrated of Da Vinci, in evidence of the conscientious care bestowed on this work, that, wishing to portray in the countenance of Judas Iscariot an expression of the most consummate rascality, he searched for weeks amongst the slums and rookeries of Milan for a fitting model. As the refectory was meanwhile littered with scaffolding and the implements of the studio, the delay occasioned by this search drew forth the remonstrances of the prior, but Leonardo contrived to put an effectual stop to these complaints by the simple expedient of threatening to paint the prior himself as Judas, if he were not allowed to take his own time.

On leaving the refectory, I drove to the beautiful

triumphal arch on the Simplon road, under which Napoleon entered Milan; then to the Scala, the largest and finest theatre in the world, which I examined throughout; and then to the Arena, a vast open amphitheatre capable of accommodating 30,000 spectators, and originally built for bull-fights. It was now filled with water, with a view to the coming skating season.

I then visited the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, both a library and museum of paintings. Its contents are deeply interesting. I was chiefly attracted in the picture gallery by the original drawings of Raphael, Michel Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, of which there is a superb collection; and in the library, by the autographs and manuscripts. There is a Virgil annotated by Petrarch; autographs of Dante; Lucrezia Borgia's letters, and a lock of her flaxen hair; a Homer of the fourth century; and the 'Palimpsests,' ancient manuscripts on vellum, with writing over writing, and amongst which Cardinal Mai discovered the long-lost 'De Republica' of Cicero. The Brera gallery, containing the principal paintings, I left until my expected return to Milan a few weeks later, and so I spent the remainder of the day in a general wandering about the city and observation of the people.

The Corso is a most picturesque and beautiful street —the most beautiful I know on the Continent, out of Paris; and the new Vittorio Arcade leading out of it is a most superb and imposing structure. This is a considerable street, in the form of a cross, of lofty handsome

houses, arched over from end to end with glass, and fresco, sculpture, and tesselation combine to make it a triumph of street architecture. Throughout the city the buildings are fine, the streets clean and well paved, and most interesting it was to observe and record the strange ways of the place. How oxen are here beasts of burden; and how many of the ladies here wear mantillas or black lace veils, and the women little knitted handkerchiefs for bonnets; and how the street lamps are on brackets from the walls, there being no foot pavement on which to erect lamp-posts, road and footway being all on one level; and how mules are driven by the Milan cabby, and how he whistles and sings on his box; and how the private coachman smokes as he drives; and how the shovel-hatted priests flit busily about, as if they felt that their days were numbering, and that they had no time to lose; and how gay are the trappings and coverings of even the cart-horses; and how bright and animated is the Piazza del Duomo, with the little shops on wheels that fill it by day and go home by night,—and where you can buy everything from comforters to buckles, trinkets to blacking, walking-sticks to bonbons, canaries to crucifixes; and how they paint the very chimney-pots; and how the most decorated part of every room is the ceiling, as if people lived on their heads; and how dainty are the shops, with their marble thresholds and seductive windows; and how the dark Italian eye sparkles in the gay crowd in the Corso; and how there is life, and light, and beauty everywhere.

My *table d'hôte* at six left me comfortable time to prepare for my night journey to Florence. My American friend, the hero of Mont Cenis, was also going, and we agreed to bear each other company. I had been sighing for "even a Yankee" to talk to, a few days before, and now I had one with a vengeance! He hailed from St. Louis, where he had made a fortune by railway contracting and cattle dealing. He chewed and spat, didn't know a word of any language but his own, and that *was* a queer one. He told me he "slep right along from Too-rin to Mile-an, as the cars were big enough to let him *twist;*" he called Pisa "Pie-sa," and Bologna "Belong;" and his great idea of the latter city was that "sassages" were made there! He talked about the "Roo Rivaloo" in Paris, and the "Champs Eliza." I enjoyed him immensely.

It was a tedious journey, and I scarcely slept at all; however, I had only one day for Florence, and was determined to make the most of it; so, after a hasty toilette and breakfast, I started in a fly with my Yankee friend,—who would persist in telling the gaping driver to "go ahead,"—for a general view of the city. I found my friend scarcely the companion I wanted here. He talked about nothing but "Yankeeland whipping combined Europe;" and thought those "coons, Michael Angeelo and Rayfel, and pictur-makers in general, wasted a lot of time." So after a while I gave him the slip, and came "right along" by myself.

As to telling you a tithe of what I saw that day, it is impossible. Is not this Florence of which I am

writing, and are not its galleries the wonder and art glory of Italy?

The two principal collections are in the Uffizi and Pitti galleries. I could only take a rapid and cursory view of them, but I think I saw the gems—the world-famed Venus de Medici (I involuntarily made reverent obeisance before this exquisite creation); Canova's Venus, that took the place of the Medician Venus, after it had been sent to Paris by Napoleon; the sixteen Niobe statues, discovered 300 years ago outside the Porta de San Paolo, at Rome; the Dancing Faun; the Wrestlers, and the celebrated Florentine Boar. It would be wearisome to particularize paintings, but delightful was it in wandering from room to room amongst the Titians, Salvator Rosas, Coreggios, Raphaels, Michel Angelos, and Leonardos, to come upon the originals of pictures and engravings familiar to me from youth. The paintings in this collection that I shall longest remember are Titian's Venus, the wonderful head of Medusa by Leonardo da Vinci—respecting which Shelley has written a charming poem—Raphael's St. John in the Desert, and his celebrated Madonna and Child—that well-known circular picture. The galleries themselves of the Pitti Palace are most superb; we have nothing like them in England, and even my Yankee friend, whom I afterwards met, admitted that there was "nothing in Noo York to whip 'em *yet*, but I guess there soon right along will be"—everything was "right along." I must speak too of the tapestries: there is one corridor 600 feet long (I

stepped it) hung on both sides with them—a quarter of a mile of the finest and most elaborate work. It is all on the same scale, and of the same choice character, as if Florence were the very temple of art, and painting and sculpture had laid upon its shrine their richest and most costly gifts.

The Duomo is a vast, but, to my taste, far from beautiful building. It has a mighty dome, larger than that of St. Peter's, and the whole structure is inlaid with coloured marble: still I could not admire it, I had too recently come from Milan. Giotto's Campanile, however, standing in the Piazza del Duomo, is remarkably fine—this is a square tower of Italian Gothic, encased, like the cathedral, in mosaic of coloured marble from basement to roof, and rising 50 feet higher than our Monument.

The church that interested me most was Santa Croce —the Westminster Abbey of Florence. Here are entombed, amongst others, the remains of Galileo, Michel Angelo, Machiavelli, and Alfieri, and there is an exquisite monument to Dante. It was an enthralling thought, that beneath my feet reposed the dust of not one, but many of Italy's most illustrious sons—a silent company of kingly men, whose names in the history of science, poetry, literature, and art, will shine with undying lustre to the end of time.

The church of Lorenzo, which I visited when passing through Florence on my return, may here be noted, in which is the chapel containing M. Angelo's two celebrated monuments of the Medici family—those world-

renowned colossal figures representing Night and Morning, Day and Twilight, lying above simple pediments, and surmounted by the seated statues of Giuliano and Lorenzo de Medici. This church also contains an unfinished group of a Virgin and Child by the same great sculptor.

I found time for a long walk about Florence. The Palazza Vecchio, with its beautiful bell-tower and projecting castellated cornice, now the Parliament-house of Italy, is a most imposing building, and in the Piazza and the Loggia di Lanzi (an open arcade forming one side of the Piazza) are several of the most remarkable works of both ancient and modern statuary; amongst them, Michel Angelo's David, Cellini's Perseus, and Ammonati's wonderful fountain. Gems of sculpture are actually littered about this place, any one of which would make the reputation of a gallery elsewhere.

With Florence, as a city, I was not so much pleased as with Milan; its chief charm is in its galleries and art treasures; still it is a very picturesque and interesting place, and its situation in the winding valley of the Arno, even now luxuriant with olive and cypress, is very beautiful. The people moreover dress in such colours, and the shops are so gay, and there is so much animation about the city. What think you of flower-stalls in the streets this 1st of December—roses, heliotropes, mignonette? I had a carnation in my button-hole all day. And such wonderful medleys of goods in the open market—gaudy worsted-work, tripe, toys, hearthrugs, gold-fish, hats, puddings all hot, ecclesiastical ornaments; all like

a fair from the noise and bustle the people make about everything. Such constitutes the interest and attraction of the city; but withal Florence must be a depressing place to live in. There is so much that is decaying and rotting and dilapidated; the very statuary, from its antiquity, seems to mock the busy present, and the Palazzas are all so huge and gaunt and *barred*, they look more like prisons than palaces. There are the oddest nooks and corners in the place. Prying about everywhere, I came upon several of them: —for instance, I enter a huge open doorway; I go up some stairs, then down some, along a passage, and come upon a small open court. The grass is growing in it; in its centre is a dry fountain, and in one corner of the court are broken pieces of a really magnificent statue, all blotched and stained with a greenish rust; a couple of storeys high there is a trelliced balcony running round this court, covered with creepers; and higher up still the life of the house seems to exist, for clothes are hanging out to dry, and a cat is sleeping on a window-sill—all such a strange contrast to the decay and ruin below.

CHAPTER IV.

Arrival in Rome — First impressions — Vatican "Drawing-room" — Walk to St. Peter's — The Capitol — Roman Forum — Arch of Septimius Severus — Arch of Titus — Arch of Constantine — The Coliseum — Meeting with my friend — The Pantheon — Tomb of Raphael — Basilica of Minerva — Further impressions of Rome.

THAT night I left Florence for Rome, arriving in the Eternal City at nine the next morning, after a most wearisome journey of thirteen hours. The train was crammed, and three-fourths at least of the passengers were ecclesiastics—bishops, priests, monks, friars—hooded and girdled, shaven and shorn, grey and white and brown—making a motley gathering on the various platforms. Amongst them there was a Mexican bishop, eighty years old, wrinkled, bent, and quavering, who having come those thousands of miles across continents and seas, to attend this Council, piteously confessed to an Irish prelate, who was in the same carriage with myself, that he had no thought of surviving to return.

It was odd to enter the city of the Cæsars by rail. The first sound I heard was the clinking of iron as the rails were being repaired, which involuntarily reminded me of the familiar blacksmith's shop of old England; and the next thing I heard was—bagpipes! The first

thing I saw that arrested my attention was the ruined arches of the Appian Viaduct, and the next was a nasty dirty dripping lamp, burning and smoking up before a most dingy picture of the Madonna in the baggage-room. To my dying day I shall never forget it, for, after alighting, we had to wait for a mortal hour and a half, pending the sorting of our luggage for examination, huddled together like cattle (there were no seats) in the baggage-room, with nothing to do but to watch that dismal lamp flickering up before the forlorn and smoke-dried face.

Released at last, and reaching my hotel—the Hotel d'Allemagna—at eleven, my purpose was to have a few hours' sleep. I had not closed my eyes the whole of that tedious night, the fourth out of five that I had spent on the wing—to say nothing of hard work in the day,—and I felt worn out; but the idea of being in the seven-hilled city was fatal to sleep. I felt also that the time was too precious, and so refreshing myself with a bath, I breakfasted, and then sallied out for a first Roman ramble.

How can I sum up my first impressions of this strange, fantastic, bewildering, grand, dirty, majestic, desolate wilderness of a city! It seemed the concentration of all the ages, without reference to any order of time; for the rotting houses of only a century old are crumbling away more rapidly than the ruins of 2000 years ago. The contrasts here are almost appalling—apple-stalls, filthy beggars, and cab-stands, cheek by jowl with monuments and sculpture that the

world raves about; dirty narrow streets, excruciatingly paved, lead you out suddenly upon a pile of old historic architecture that, in spite of its ruin and decay, startles you with its sublimity.

I walked across the Ponte St. Angelo up to St. Peter's—a strange walk. The bridge and the road beyond were kept by the Pontifical cavalry—the most miserably horsed regiment I ever saw in my life; for the animals looked not only stuffed, but badly stuffed; the place, however, was gay and alive with ecclesiastical bustle—cardinals and bishops driving past in tawdry scarlet carriages,—suggestive of our City on Lord Mayor's day,—each with three or four footmen, whose liveries rivalled the episcopal vestments inside. In explanation of all this military state and episcopal flutter, I was told that on this day the Pope had called together his cardinals and archbishops for the purpose of submitting to them a plan of proceeding for the coming Council; and it seems that on the occasion of a "Vatican Drawing-room," the Pontifical cavalry are always in attendance. Then the priests and monks were swarming like flies about the streets; friars brown and friars grey, hooded and sandalled, some bareheaded, and some with hats that would roof a summer-house! —a strange and motley gathering.

Shouldering my way through this unwonted crowd, I went on in a sort of dream to St. Peter's. The Piazza and the statue-crowned colonnade surrounding it, and its two noble fountains and central obelisk are very imposing; but with the exterior of the cathedral itself

I, like the rest of the world, was disappointed. The dome is so far back that its gigantic proportions are lost, and the monstrous façade is simply hideous: even its size does not redeem it, for, till you get close to it, you cannot in the least realize its vast dimensions. The colour of the travertine of which it is built is a brownish-yellow, giving the structure a dirty appearance, so different from either the crystal purity of Milan Cathedral—still so fresh in my memory—or the becoming gloom of our own St. Paul's, with which I was proud to contrast it. But, oh! the glory of the interior! it surpassed all my expectations, and really appalled me with its magnificence. Nothing ever written about it could be an exaggeration. It is so different from Milan Cathedral, and awakens such a different class of emotions, that the two may not be compared; each in its way a glory and a wonder. I could this morning only walk hastily round it. The fittings for the Council were superb: red cloth, green cloth, gold cloth, gorgeous carpeting and hangings of crimson and purple; the workmen still busy, and the hammer and the saw making strange music in the temple. It involuntarily recalled the busy, noisy preparations for our late International Exhibition—an unseemly fancy perhaps, but then I am jotting down just what struck me at the time.

On leaving St. Peter's I started for a stroll over the Mons Capitolinus, through the Forum, and on to the Coliseum. Oh! what a world of stirring associations is awakened here! ruin, ruin, ruin, all around you;

but what a majestic desolation it is! The arches and columns and statues, in spite of jagged outlines, yawning rents, and bleared visages, are in themselves still things of beauty; but it is the thought that you tread the very stones the Cæsars trod 2000 years ago, and see the very monuments they reared and gloried in, and the ruins of the palaces they dwelt in, and of the arches through which in triumph the chariot of the Conqueror had been often drawn and the Imperial Eagles borne—this it is that constitutes the strange and thrilling fascination of the place.

The points of interest, of course, were many. The first attraction on leaving the Corso is the ascent to the Capitol, surmounted by the colossal statues of Castor and Pollux, and leading to that world-famed bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, and to the courts and corridors of the Capitol, strewn in profusion with torsos, colossal heads and limbs, and fragments of antique sculpture, each with a history. Then, on the other side of the hill, you reach the triumphal arch of Septimius Severus. This arch was erected in honour of the emperor and his sons Caracalla and Geta, to celebrate their victories over the Parthians and Persians. On the top there was formerly a triumphal car drawn by six horses. This has passed away, and the other sculptures, illustrative of military glory, are now but dimly discernible. One inscription, however, may still be read, sadly suggestive of human depravity, and instructively eloquent of the transitoriness of even imperial glory. After the death of Septimius Severus,

his son Caracalla cruelly put his brother Geta to death, and you see where he erased his name from the inscription.

Leaving this arch, you proceed down the old Roman Forum, by the column of Phocos, and along the Via Sacra, passing the ruins of the Temple of Fortune and the three exquisite Corinthian columns of the Temple of Jupiter Stator. The base of these columns, as well as that of the arch of Septimius Severus, is about 12 feet below the present level of the ground, showing how road-levels rise in the course of centuries. Then, on the right, you pass the Mons Palatinus, immediately beneath the site of Cicero's house and the ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, and on the left the Constantine Basilica, until presently you stand under the celebrated Arch of Titus. This is not only still beautiful as an architectural structure and interesting as a relic of imperial pride and conquest, but it is valuable as a witness to the truth of the historical Scriptures. This arch was erected to commemorate the conquest of Jerusalem, and amongst its bas-reliefs you see a procession of Jewish captives with their silver trumpets, the table of shewbread, and the seven-branched candlestick. This is the only authentic representation of these objects, and they exactly correspond to the descriptions both of Josephus and Holy Writ. Who shall say that in the conflict which seems now impending between Christianity and infidelity, these crumbling stones, by the mute but irresistible testimony they bear to the veracity of the sacred record, may do no

inconsiderable service in vindicating the truths of our holy religion?

From the Arch of Titus you pass by the ruins of the Temple of Venus and Rome, and arrive at those of the "Meta Sudans," a conical fountain near the entrance to the Coliseum, supposed to have been erected for the use of the gladiators after their toils in the arena.

To the right of this is the beautiful Arch of Constantine, in the road leading to the Via Appia. This is one of the most imposing monuments in Rome, and is covered with sculptures and inscriptions. It was built to commemorate Constantine's victory over Maxentius, and the bas-reliefs tell the tale of the conquest. On the outer sides of the arch two circular medallions represent the chariots of the sun and moon, typifying the emperor's dominion over the Eastern and the Western worlds; but to me the most interesting feature in this arch is an inscription referring to the cessation of the Christian persecutions. This is the incident in the reign of Constantine, rather than the glory of his victories or the extent of his dominions, that gives immortality to his name.

And now at length you stand under the shadow of the towering walls of the Coliseum. Oh, the wonderful interest of this place! It is a ruin, and it is not a ruin. In spite of its grassed walls and broken outline, its rents and fissures—in which trees grow, waving their branches against the sky—it seems peopled as you gaze down upon its vast arena. No effort of imagination

is required to see it as it was. You actually witness the imperial show, and almost hear the howling of the wild beasts waiting for their prey, and—more horrible still—the roar of the populace exulting in the cruelties of the accursed strife; and then to let the eye rest and the thought linger upon the simple wooden cross standing in the middle of the arena, on the very spot where, in those dark pagan days, fellow Christians had been torn to pieces—all this is an excitement almost beyond endurance. One feels triumphant and jubilant over the rot and ruin of the place—and yet *as* a ruin one would have its every stone preserved.

The history of the Coliseum may be very briefly told. It was begun by Vespasian A.D. 72, and dedicated by Titus. Church tradition states that it was designed by Gaudentius, a Christian martyr, and that thousands of captive Jews were engaged in its construction. The gladiatorial games in honour of its dedication lasted a hundred days, and 5000 wild beasts were slaughtered in the arena. During the persecution of the Christians it was the scene of fearful barbarities. In the reign of Trajan, St. Ignatius was brought from Antioch purposely to be devoured by wild beasts in this amphitheatre. Its dimensions are stupendous. It is nearly one-third of a mile in circumference, and its outer wall is as high as the gallery of our Monument. Palaces have been built from its ruins, and yet materials for a city seem to be left. It has been used from time to time for various purposes—at one time as a fortress, at another as a woollen factory; but a hundred years ago

Benedict XIV. consecrated the building to the memory of the Christian martyrs who had perished in it, and since then it has been held sacred from all profane uses, and is now carefully preserved. Every Friday a monk preaches from a rude pulpit in the arena, and around the latter are placed the fourteen stations of the cross. Its associations are thus of a most varied character.

For the artist, the antiquarian, the poet, the devotee, it has alike a world of absorbing interest, and even the naturalist may study amidst its ruins, no less than 420 species of plants having been found growing amongst its grassy stones. Eighteen hundred years ago this mighty structure was raised, and so solid and substantial still are its stupendous walls—despoiled and rent and fissured though they are—that you feel centuries of decay may yet pass without leaving a trace of their work upon them. The magnificent description by Byron of the Coliseum by moonlight may not inaptly be quoted here.

"I do remember me, that, in my youth
When I was wandering—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's walls
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome:
The trees that grew above the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watchdog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsar's palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful sound
Began and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood

Within a bow-shot—where the Cæsars dwelt
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove that springs through level battlements,
And twines its roots with the Imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth,—
But the gladiator's bloody Circus stands
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Cæsar's chambers and the Augustan halls
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.—
And thou didst shine—thou rolling moon—upon
All these, and cast a soft and tender light
Which softened down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and filled up
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful that once was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old!
The dead but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns."

Up to this period of my tour I had been companionless—everywhere a stranger and alone—but on the evening of this day it was my happy lot to meet the friend, the promise of whose companionship in Rome and during the remainder of my tour, had been one of the inducements to my leaving home.

On the following morning our first visit was paid to the Pantheon. This is one of the glories of ancient Rome; it is in almost perfect preservation, and yet was built by Agrippa 27 B.C. The grandeur and sublimity of the dome are indescribable, and the thought of this old heathen temple having become a Christian shrine, is beautiful beyond expression. It contains the tomb of Raphael. About thirty years ago, in order to set at rest doubts that had been cast upon the place of his burial, this tomb was opened. The coffin was found,

and there were the skull and bones of the immortal painter; the hand so perfect that a cast was taken from it. The remains were then entombed in a sarcophagus, and restored to their resting-place, where they lie now. Amongst those who witnessed the disentombment was Lord Lytton, who accidentally strolled into the church at the time, and who has recorded the incident in one of his most beautiful poems:—

> "I paused and gazed upon the all
> The worm had spared to Raphael.
> The pall
> With its dark hues, gave forth, in gleaming white,
> The delicate bones; for still an undestroyed
> Beauty, amidst decay, appeared to dwell
> About the mournful relics; and the light,
> In crown-like halo, lovingly did fall
> On the broad brow,—the hushed and ruined cell
> Of the old art."

Annibale Caracci is also buried in the Pantheon.

We afterwards visited the Minerva Church, the only Gothic church in Rome, and exquisitely beautiful. Here is Michel Angelo's celebrated statue of Christ, evidently held not only in great admiration by artists, but in high estimation by the faithful, for the toe is fast wearing away from the constant pressure of devout lips. In this church I witnessed the first performance of high mass in Rome, and was particularly impressed with the evident devotion and earnestness of some young Papal Zouaves who were among the worshippers.

The afternoon was wet; and feeling a little reaction from the rushing work of the last week, I was glad of the excuse of a little quiet and rest. I nevertheless

wandered for an hour about the city. I would not live in Rome for the world. Apart from the romance of its ruins, and the glory of St. Peter's and the Vatican, it is a dreary, dirty, unsightly place. The people are filthy, the streets narrow and undrained. The palaces are huge ugly blocks of building, in style something between a prison and a warehouse. The shops are poor, even in the Corso, and the whole aspect of the place is that of dirty, decaying grandeur; gaudy, scarlet-reined carriages, filled with gaudier ecclesiastics, roll about amongst the dirt and rags in strange contrast. The incongruities of the place are really painful: filthy beggars swarm about the grand old ruins; a cab-stand and some rotting stables disfigure the Forum, where St. Paul preached; and on the Via Sacra, where Horace and Cicero walked, every conceivable abomination is accumulated, and you can buy onions at a stall! Infinitely more impressive would these remnants of the grand old civilization be were they crumbling away on some desolate plain.

CHAPTER V.

Objects of the Council — Castle of St. Angelo — Military mass — St. Barbara — Interior of St. Peter's — Preparations for the Council — St. Veronica — Monuments — Statue of St. Peter — Sistine Chapel — Michel Angelo's 'Last Judgment' — Sculpture galleries of the Vatican — The Apollo Belvedere — The Laocoon.

As there were many English and Irish priests in the hotel at which I was stopping, besides a host of other ecclesiastics, I had every opportunity of hearing the whole subject of the Council discussed; and here it may not be uninteresting to record the statements that were made to me touching the objects and prospects of the great Œcumenical gathering. It was distinctly denied that anything connected with the Council was a foregone conclusion, and also that the question of the personal infallibility of the Pope was to be either certainly discussed or certainly decreed. I was told that it would be open to any member of the Council to propose any subject for discussion; every one was to have a hearing, and as the proceedings were certain to last six months, and might last twelve, every subject would be thoroughly sifted and ventilated. They told me that the Council was only summoned for the purpose of discussing the best means of arresting the increasing infidelity of the day, and for the purpose of settling

matters of discipline, and the rites of the Eastern branch of the Church. My principal informant was an Irish ecclesiastic—a most intelligent, scholar-like, and accomplished man; one amongst many with whom it was my happiness to have much intimate and interesting converse—but the foregoing as to the purposes of the Council was the evident belief of all with whom I conversed, and whose information ought to have been good. I can only say now, as I said then—"*nous verrons.*"

On the morning of Saturday, December 4th, I proceeded to St. Peter's, purposing to devote the entire day to a careful inspection of its treasures and those of the sculpture galleries of the Vatican. On crossing the Ponte St. Angelo I saw an unwonted stir and bustle about the Castle. There were two Pontifical oriflammes floating on the walls. Soldiers crowded the ramparts, and presently the cannon began to boom and thunder forth. The effect was very thrilling, for the Castle—surmounted by the winged angel sheathing its sword—is a most imposing structure, and all the associations of the place are impressive. It was erected by Hadrian, for his own tomb, A.D. 130, in the gardens of Domitia, the aunt of Nero, and was the sepulchre of many of the Roman emperors until the fifth century, when it was turned into a fortress. The Catholic tradition is, that when Gregory the Great was offering up a solemn service in St. Peter's to avert the pestilence which followed the inundation of 589, the Archangel Michael appeared to him, standing on the summit of the fortress

sheathing his sword, to signify that the plague was stayed. How the archangel was recognized as St. Michael is not recorded; but we must assume that his credentials were deemed satisfactory, as the Pope built a chapel on the summit of the fortress to commemorate the event, and this was afterwards superseded by a statue of the archangel. The bridge on which I stood was built by Hadrian, and has been subsequently adorned by twelve colossal statues—St. Peter, St. Paul, and ten angels each with an emblem of the Passion.

In passing on to St. Peter's, I saw a crowd at the door of the church in the Borgo Nuovo, and the pavement strewn with leaves and branches. I went in, and saw a most beautiful spectacle. The church—a very fine one, and hung with drapery of crimson and gold—was crowded with soldiers, all standing in military order. High mass was being celebrated. When I entered, a first-rate military band was playing the overture to "Masaniello." I got up well to the front, and there, before the high altar, was a space railed off for the officers, about thirty of whom were present, in splendid uniforms, and covered with orders and decorations. Presently the band ceased, and the priests began to chant, and then the organ poured forth a soft and solemn strain, and something was brought out of a box at which the soldiers, at word of command, presented arms; and then this something was taken down to the reserved seats, and handed round by the priests for the officers to kiss—only the officers—which they all did in turn, between each kiss the treasure being care-

fully wiped by the priest; here followed some slow, solemn music by the band, and the priests went on with the service; and then a bell was rung, and the soldiers again presented arms; and by-and-by the Host was raised, and, again at the word of command, the soldiers with a clash of steel went on their knees—which was most effective; and then something else was brought out of another box and handed round to the officers to be kissed, and there was more presenting of arms; and then the band struck up a waltz, and in the middle of it all the people were prostrating and crossing themselves, and a priest was droning away at low mass in a side chapel near me; and presently all was over, and the priests filed off with the treasures, to put them away until their kissing time came round again; and the officers passed out—looking, I thought, very sheepish; and the soldiers marched away, with the standard floating and the band playing; and the crowd dispersed, leaving the church to a few beggars, apparently fixtures to the edifice, and the floor of which,—being covered with trodden leaves and branches, and dirty with the dirty feet of the crowd,—looked like the pavement of a market-town on the evening of market-day, before it is swept up!

And what do my readers think was the explanation of all this, given me, with perfect gravity, by a priest and an officer of the Papal Zouaves? This was the Festival of St. Barbara, who is the patron saint of *gunpowder!* The blazing away at the Castle was in her honour, and these soldiers were the artillery of the

Pontifical army, who always attend this church on this day in military state and full uniform to hear mass, kiss her precious relics, and ask for her saintly blessing!

St. Peter's is assuredly the grandest and most gorgeous structure that has been built since the time of Solomon. I had no conception before I came to Rome of the ineffable splendour of its interior. The vault of its mighty dome towering into mid-air, and resplendent with painting and mosaics; its arched roof, from end to end one sweep of carving and gold; its stupendous pillars, blocks of the richest marble, and alive from floor to roof with sculpture; its wonderful bronzes and mosaics; its abounding wealth of statuary; its chapels, gorgeous with colour, and enshrining monuments that are the glory of Italy, and oppress you with their marvellous beauty—all this combines to make St. Peter's the transcendent thing it is; but I felt this day, as when I first entered it, that devotion is not the sentiment it excites—you marvel and admire, but do not adore.

It was now nearly complete for the Council which was to open in the following week. There were canopied Pontifical thrones, with hangings of purple and cloth of gold; scarlet seats for the princes of the Church; tier upon tier of lordly benches, for the bishops and patriarchs—the Fathers of the Council; boxes of crimson and velvet for the royal and imperial visitors, and draped galleries for the nobles and senators. The marble floor was richly carpeted, and round the walls of the vast council-chamber, consisting of one entire transept

of the stupendous cathedral, were superb paintings, recently executed, and even rivalling the masterpieces of the earlier Italian art. Everything was here to make a most imposing show, but nothing that—to me at least—could excite a sentiment of worship, or be even suggestive of the sacredness and solemnity of the occasion. The idea was simply of a mighty pageant, and I was again irresistibly reminded of the preparations for an International Exhibition.

But St. Peter's is deeply interesting. Underneath the dome and beneath the floor are deposited (as "the faithful" believe) the remains of St. Peter, in a chamber only entered by the Pope, and on rare occasions. His Holiness enters on his knees, pausing at different stages, and finally prostrates himself to kiss the revered dust. This chamber is entered through a most elaborate bronze and gilded gateway, and descended into by a double flight of marble steps, surrounded by a rich balustrade, on which ninety-three gorgeous brass lamps are kept burning night and day. Before the entrance, and at the bottom of the winding stairs, is one of Canova's most beautiful works—the kneeling statue of Pius VI. He is praying before the tomb of the Apostle, and the attitude of the figure was prescribed by Pius himself. Above the tomb is the high altar, surmounted by the baldacchino, or grand canopy. This is of bronze, supported by four spiral columns, and covered with the richest gilt ornaments and foliage. It is nearly 100 feet high, and a work of marvellous beauty. On each of the four massive

piers supporting the dome are two recesses, one above the other—the lower containing magnificent colossal statues of St. Veronica, St. Helena, St. Longinus, and St. Andrew; and in the recesses above are balconies, in which the relics of these saints are said to be preserved, and which no one under the rank of a canon of the Church is allowed to visit. In one balcony is said to be the head of St. Andrew, in another a piece of the real cross, and in another the head of the identical spear that pierced our Saviour's side; but the most revered relic is the Sudarium of St. Veronica, or the handkerchief which "the faithful" are taught to believe was used by our Lord, on his way to the Cross, to wipe the sweat from his brow, and which is said still to retain the impression of his features. Some historians tell us that the name Veronica has its only origin in the term "Vera Iconica," or "a true portrait," applied to the early likenesses of our Lord; and that this saint is therefore nothing more than the personification of an idea, having no biography, and existing only in Church legend. However this may be, in Holy Week, and on high festivals and state occasions, candles are kept burning before this handkerchief—as they were this day—and it is exhibited to the people, who, as a most natural consequence of their belief in the legend, go wild with rapture when they catch sight of the sacred relic, and fall down before it in an ecstasy of adoration.*

* In Chambers's 'Book of Days,' vol. i., page 101, a picture of the handkerchief of St. Veronica is given.

Besides the claims, however, of St. Veronica, there are in St. Peter's other demands on your faith. In one chapel, called the Capella della Colonna Sacra, is a marble column stated to have been brought from the temple at Jerusalem, and to be the identical pillar against which our Saviour leaned when he disputed with the Doctors.

It may be briefly stated that there are twenty-nine large mosaics in St. Peter's, of which the finest is that of Raphael's picture of 'The Transfiguration'—a work of most extraordinary skill and of marvellous beauty. The most remarkable monuments are: that of Clement XIII., by Canova; that of Pius VII., by Thorwaldsen; the celebrated Pietà by Michel Angelo; and the monument to the three Princes of the House of Stuart, by Canova.

This last deserves a special mention. Its expense was principally defrayed by George IV., and it professes to be a "*Monument to the memory of James III., Charles III., and Henry IX., kings of England.*" "Beneath that unrivalled dome," says Lord Mahon, "lie mouldering the remains of what was once a brave and gallant heart; and a stately monument from the chisel of Canova, and at the charge, as I believe, of the House of Hanover, has since arisen to the memory of James III., Charles III., and Henry IX., kings of England—names which an Englishman can scarcely read without a smile or a sigh! Often at the present day does the British traveller turn from the sunny crest of the Pincian, or the carnival throng of the

Corso, to gaze in thoughtful silence on that mockery of human greatness and that last record of ruined hopes! The tomb before him is of a race justly expelled; the magnificent temple that enshrines it is of a faith wisely reformed: yet who at such a moment would harshly remember the errors of either, and might not join in the prayer even of that erring Church for the departed "Requiescant in pace?"

In one of the side aisles is a niche which is reserved as the temporary resting place of the last Pope until the death of his successor, when it is removed for permanent burial: the remains of Gregory XVI. lie there now.

One great point of interest in St. Peter's is the well-known bronze statue of St. Peter. It is a rudely executed work, and some antiquaries state that it is only a cast of the bronze statue of Jupiter Capitolinus. Others state that it is the identical statue of Jupiter himself, transformed into that of the Apostle. However, there it is, with its two fingers raised, and its black toe extended. On passing up the basilica, devotees kiss this toe; and I watched the process for some time. Streams of people came up—elegant women, sandalled monks, purple-robed bishops, soldiers, beggars. I counted fifty-two salutations in five minutes. The toe is fast wearing away, and already the foot has a stumpy Chinese look about it, and shines like polished ebony. The process is, a kiss; then to press the head against the toe, and then another kiss. I noticed that nine out of ten took the precaution to wipe it first. I certainly should have been one of the nine.

On leaving St. Peter's, we ascended the Scala Regia, and entered the Vatican. We first visited the Sistine Chapel: here the principal services of the Holy Week are held, and the celebrated "Miserere" is chanted. Over the altar is Michel Angelo's famous fresco of the 'Last Judgment,' and the entire ceiling, containing a series of illustrations of Scripture history, is his work. The fresco is a sublime conception, and its execution a miracle of art, but it did not give me much pleasure. It is dimmed by the smoke of 10,000 candles, and the subject is, to my taste, too appalling to be attractive. Christ is in the middle of the picture, with the Virgin seated on His right hand, surrounded by saints and patriarchs, martyrs and angels. St. Catherine is there with her wheel, St. Sebastian with his arrows, St. Bartholomew with his skin, and St. Peter with his keys. In the lower part of the picture the graves are opening and the dead are rising; the blessed are being assisted by angels, and the damned are being dragged down by demons. You see on one hand Charon ferrying a group across the Styx, and on the other beatified hosts are floating to the skies—all rendered with wonderful power; but to my mind the scene is too awful for illustration by poor human hands, the subject too solemn and terrible for the mere triflings of art.

We then entered the sculpture galleries, and what a feast we had! One side of the first gallery is devoted to Pagan inscriptions and statues, and the other to Christian remains, chiefly from the Catacombs. Raoul Rochette, in his work on the Catacombs,

says in reference to this gallery of inscriptions, "I have spent many entire days in this sanctuary of antiquity, where the sacred and the profane stand facing each other in the written monuments preserved to us, as in the days when Paganism and Christianity, striving with all their powers, were engaged in mortal conflict; and were it only for the treasure of impressions which we receive from this immense collection of Christian epitaphs, taken from the graves of the Catacombs and now affixed to the walls of the Vatican, this alone would be an inexhaustible fund of recollections and enjoyment for a whole life."

An attempt to enumerate the works we lingered over in these Vatican galleries would be absurd as well as tedious. Florence perhaps contains the largest number, but here, after all, are the choicest and most world-renowned productions of the sculptor's art. A few, however, must be particularized: the statue of Augustus, only recently discovered in the ruins of the Livian Villa, a truly imperial figure, and singularly like the First Napoleon; the statue of Demosthenes; an Athlete, a statue of wonderful beauty, the production of Lysippus, B.C. 325, alluded to by Pliny, who states that the Emperor Tiberius wished to remove it from the baths of Agrippa to his own palace, but such was the clamour of the people that he had to abandon the idea; the Torso Belvedere, the beauty and symmetry of which are the enthusiastic admiration of artists—Michel Angelo declared that he was its pupil; the celebrated statue of Meleager, with the boar's head

and the dog; Canova's Perseus; and the two Boxers. When the masterpieces of ancient art were carried off to Paris, these figures by Canova replaced them, and the "Perseus" was called "the Consolatrice."

Passing on from gem to gem you at length stand before the immortal Apollo Belvedere:—

> "The lord of the unerring bow,
> The God of life and poesy and light."

Who is not familiar with the casts and copies of this exquisite work? and yet, till the original is seen, its matchless grace and beauty cannot be known. The attitude is that of an archer who has just discharged the arrow, and you can well understand Dean Milman's beautiful line:—

> "I hear the arrow hurtle in the air."

You feel that the bow has been that instant drawn, and expect to see a sudden relaxing of the exquisite limbs. We were entranced. I was greatly interested in recalling a stanza from my gifted companion's beautiful poem 'Aletheia':—

> "Alert in attitude, serene in look,
> With death yet flying from the jarring cord,
> As though, from Time's abyss the Python took
> New life to die once more by Delos' Lord,
> Grandly he stands, for one short moment's span,
> Like the god graven in the Vatican."

Yet another work of even more overpowering interest must be noticed—the Laocoon—the group that inspired one of Childe Harold's most exquisite stanzas. The

writhing agony of the sons enfolded in the serpent's embrace, and piteously looking for help to their father, whose despairing struggles are so painfully impotent—all so eloquently told:—

> "Vain against the coiling strain
> And gripe and deepening of the dragon's grasp
> The old man's clench—the long-envenom'd chain
> Rivets the living links."

All this is rendered with intense power, and from the perfection of its anatomy, its dramatic expression, its graceful lines and artistic grouping, it is certainly the very crown and triumph of the sculptor's art. Remember, too, its antiquity. It stood in the palace of the Emperor Titus, and in those days, as related by Pliny, it was renowned as *the* masterpiece. Michel Angelo is said to have always despaired of his own powers and fame whenever he contemplated this work—and there it is still, unrivalled and supreme. To my mind, the obscurity in which the origin of these antique sculptures is shrouded gives them a strange and mystic interest. You may almost imagine them to be the production of that age when the gods are said to have mingled with men, and that other than human hands had wrought them.

I will only briefly refer to a few other exquisite works that attracted us that day: the celebrated Cupid of Praxiteles, called the "Genius of the Vatican," and the cast of which you see in nearly every sculptor's studio. The group of Silenus and Bacchus; the recumbent statue of Ariadne, respecting the discovery of which a

beautiful Latin poem has been written; the colossal bronze statue of Hercules; and an exquisite statue of a Discobolus, throwing a "discus" or quoit. I may also refer to an antique marble chariot and horses, life-size, and to two deeply interesting sarcophagi. These latter were found in the respective burying places of Constantia, the daughter of Constantine, and of St. Helena, his mother, whose bodies they must once have contained. Such, in brief, are a few of the objects that so profoundly interest and delight you, as you stroll through room after room in the Museum of the Vatican.

CHAPTER VI.

High mass in St. Peter's — Extraordinary gathering — Basilica of St. Paolo — Church of the Three Fountains — Tomb of Cecilia Metella — The Appian Way — Church of S. Clemente — View from the Capitol — Museum of the Capitol — The Dying Gladiator.

On the Sunday preceding the opening of the Council (December 5th), I witnessed an extraordinary scene; high mass at St. Peter's—the celebrant being a cardinal, and the congregation including 600 archbishops and bishops. We were in the cathedral by nine o'clock —the service was to be at ten; a great multitude of people had already assembled, and a most extraordinary gathering it was! Priests, monks, friars, of every colour, order, and device of costume; dignitaries of the Church, of every grade; cardinals with their trains and train-bearers: patriarchs from the East; bishops from the ends of the earth, black, brown, and white, but all gorgeously attired in their episcopal lace and purple; dirty lazzaroni; the picturesque Swiss guards, with their black helmets, and white plumes, and glittering halberds, and in their gay harlequin dress (designed by Michel Angelo) of red, yellow, and black stripes; ladies dressed and veiled in black; Sisters of Mercy, with a sufficient expanse of stiff white cap and collar to sail a three-decker; groups of penitents waiting for their turn outside the confessionals, within a foot of the careless

crowd; foreigners taking notes and sketches; gaily-attired Roman cavaliers; bagpipe players, instruments and all; soldiers; beggars; sacristans; pontifical police; Zouaves; acolytes;—all these made up a scene of marvellous interest.

There is a confraternity here who devote themselves exclusively to accompanying the "Blessed Sacrament," as it is carried by the priest to the dying. They go in procession, two and two, like a boarding-school, being headed by a huge crucifix, and droning a hideous chant. They consist principally of the nobility of Rome; but go about incogniti, covering up their heads and faces; two small holes being left in the head-dress for the eyes. Some of these brothers dress all in white, some all in black, others in red, others again in a mixture of red, black, and white. Their dress consists of a loose robe down to the feet, a girdle round the waist, a tippet, and a close-fitting nightcap covering the face, save for the aforesaid small holes, and coming to a point on the chest. They go about in batches of twenty or so, all in one batch dressing in the same colour; and they are the most fantastic, comical, ghastly, merry-andrew sort of creatures imaginable. They irresistibly suggest a pantomime, and yet are enough with their two eye-peeps to frighten children into fits. This morning, whilst waiting for the service, the crowd in the cathedral was opened several times to make way for them. They went from one holy spot to another, invariably visiting the sacred handkerchief, and stopping here and there at the word

of command—which consisted of a rap on the floor by a sort of drum-major who preceded the crucifix—to kneel down all in a row, and not rising till the drum-major's staff rapped again; and it may be imagined how these queer creatures added to the picturesqueness of the scene.

On looking round it seemed as if all the wardrobes of all the theatres in London had been rifled. By-and-by the bishops began to stream in and take their seats, tier on tier of them, down the tribune, the part corresponding to the chancel of our churches. The Swiss Guard kept a line across the nave before the high altar. Between the lines of bishops on their crimson seats was a long sweep of green carpet, ending in a raised dais ascended by steps covered by scarlet cloth, and containing the Pope's throne, the whole surmounted by a crimson canopy, and backed by drapery of cloth of gold. I managed to get almost a front place. Immediately above me were the candles burning before the shrine of St. Veronica, and immediately to my right were the ninety-three lamps twinkling round the tomb of St. Peter, and over all was the superb ethereal dome, and around the glistening marbles and mosaics, and the gorgeous shrines and world-famed monuments and statuary that make up the wonder and glory of St. Peter's. The sun was streaming in upon this magnificence, gilding it all with a heightened splendour. Presently the officiating cardinal and priests, in their richly embroidered chasubles and dalmatics, marched down through the long line of cardinals, patriarchs, and

bishops, accompanied by a crowd of acolytes, and Mass was commenced. And then there burst forth the divinest chanting from the Papal choir, and there were crossings and genuflexions, and incensings, and prostratings, and lighting of tapers, and ringing of bells. At the elevation of the Host the Swiss Guards saluted and crashed to their knees, the whole assembly also kneeling—with the exception of the faithless few,—who, remaining erect amidst the prostrate crowd, looked like sentinels watching over a slumbering army. Then clouds of incense rose, and a priest carried a blessing,—consisting of a "pax tecum" and a touch with both hands,—from the celebrant to a bishop at the end of one of the tiers, who reverently receiving it, faced about and passed it on to the next, and he in his turn to the next, like a game, till all 600 had received it; and then the chanting became richer, more candles were lit, and more bells rung, and all this while the crowd was humming and buzzing about me, and fighting for front places, and tiptoeing to see. A priest and a Swiss guard had a regular tussle close to me, and another priest borrowed my opera-glass, and some Sisters near me were crossing themselves—like a deaf and dumb alphabet gone mad—and an artist was sketching in his note-book, and dronings and tinklings from distant altars made a confusion in the ears; and still the sun shone gloriously over the whole, and still the incense curled to the roof, till by-and-by the service was over, and the cardinal celebrant, priests and acolytes marched back again, a perfect glitter of gold and silver, and looking, as they swept through the slanting sun-

beams in their variegated ecclesiastic plumage, like a lustrous flight of birds of paradise!

Then there was an elaborate arranging of cardinals' trains, and preparing to go, and the Swiss Guards opened a way through the crowd, and, once more pressing their episcopal lips against St. Peter's apostolic and episcopal toe, the bishops passed out. It was a gorgeous, bewildering, and exciting scene; but to me no more suggestive of worship than a Covent Garden pantomime or Bartholomew Fair.

In the afternoon my friend and I drove out to see the Basilica of San Paolo, about a mile outside the walls. Incredible as the statement may appear, we actually agreed that this was, if possible, more superb than St. Peter's—we were dumb-stricken by its splendour. About sixty years ago the old basilica was burnt down, and this is the new structure. Emperors, kings, and the faithful throughout the world have contributed to the cost of its restoration. The earlier church was commenced by the Emperor Valentinian II., A.D. 388, on the site of a more ancient basilica, founded by Constantine. It was completed by Honorius, and in the eighth century was restored by Leo III. It was the only existing specimen in Rome of the ancient basilicas, similar in plan to the original St. Peter's. Under the high altar was the tomb which tradition has pointed out as the burial-place of St. Paul, whose body is said to have been removed from the Vatican and brought here, enclosed in a stone urn.

To British travellers this basilica is especially interesting, as before the Reformation the kings of England were its protectors, just as in these days the Emperor

of Austria is the protector of the basilica of the Vatican, the sovereign of France of that of the Lateran, and the sovereign of Spain of that of Sta. Maria Maggiore. In 1823 the roof took fire, and the whole structure became a heap of ruins. In the erection of the new building, the plan of the old has been carefully followed, and all that architectural skill, artistic taste, and lavish expenditure could accomplish, has been done to produce an interior of surpassing magnificence. The effect of its splendour, moreover, as it first bursts upon you, is greatly enhanced by its unexpectedness, so strikingly does it contrast with the exterior unsightliness and miserable surroundings of the edifice.

Over the high altar is a beautiful Gothic canopy on four polished columns of red porphyry; over this again, supported on pillars of oriental alabaster, is a magnificent bronze baldacchino, a present to Pope Gregory XVI. from Mahomet Ali. Beneath the altar are preserved the relics of St. Paul, with the exception of the head, which is said to be at the Lateran; the chamber containing these relics is descended into by a flight of steps before the altar, surrounded by a balustrade on which—as before the relics of St. Peter—lamps are kept burning night and day. In the nave and aisles there are four rows of polished granite columns, eighty in all, the capitals being of white marble. Each of these is in a single block, hewn out of quarries on the Lago Maggiore, and brought from thence on rafts to the mouth of the Po, and then by sailing-vessels to the port of Rome. The roof of the nave is a

magnificent specimen of carved woodwork, and gorgeous with painting and gilding. Above the capitals of the columns and below the clerestory windows there is a series of medallions, containing mosaics of the popes from the time of St. Peter. The floor is one level sweep of polished marble, and the perspective effect of its forest of pillars is strikingly beautiful. It would weary my readers to speak of the paintings, and marbles, and monuments that enrich the shrines and chapels of this wonderful temple; but everything is in keeping. Its architectural beauty is palatial rather than ecclesiastical; but I can believe that there is nothing more superb in any regal palace in the world. Yet where do my readers think this cathedral is situated? In a malaria-infected marsh! Long before the destruction of the old building, pestilence had driven even the monks away, and this magnificent structure is surrounded only by a few miserable peasants' huts, that are not habitable for more than a portion of the year! A seemingly strange waste this of wealth and labour; as if the one only end of the erection of a temple were the glorification of ecclesiastical art, and not the bringing home of the Gospel message to the hearts and consciences of sinful men.

Two miles farther into the country there is a church called S. Paolo alle tre Fontane, or "the Church of the Three Fountains." This is built on the spot where St. Paul is supposed to have been beheaded; it is celebrated for the three fountains in its interior, of hot, tepid, and cold water; the church legend being that St.

Paul's head, after its severance from the trunk, bounded three times, and at each place where it fell a fountain instantly sprang up! A priest assured me with perfect gravity that this was an indisputable fact.

We finished the afternoon by a drive along the Appian Way to the tomb of Cecilia Metella. This is a circular tower 70 feet in diameter, of such solid construction that, though 2000 years old, there it is still, with its beautiful frieze and cornice in almost complete preservation. Byron has invested this mausoleum with peculiar interest by his beautiful allusion to it in 'Childe Harold':—

> "There is a stern round tower of other days,
> Firm as a fortress with its fence of stone:
> Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
> Standing with half its battlements alone,
> And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
> The garland of eternity, where wave
> The green leaves over all by time o'er thrown;—
> What was this tower of strength? within its cave
> What treasure lay so locked, so hid?—a woman's grave."

It was erected by the wealthy triumvir Crassus, to the memory of his wife, and there you still read her name, carved on the stone 2000 years ago. At this spot in the Appian Way, the original pavement is laid bare. You stand on the very stones on which, sixty years before the birth at Bethlehem, Julius Cæsar and his co-triumvirs might have strolled at sunset as we were strolling then; and, more thrilling still was the thought that a century later, by this very tomb, and along this road, a band of recently-shipwrecked men had passed, the central figure of which was the mighty Apostle of

the Gentiles himself—a prisoner in charge of the centurion Julius and his soldiers—and who, having "appealed unto Cæsar," was being conducted to Rome—"And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns; whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."

It was a lovely evening, and a rich sunset lit up the ivied ruins of tower and tomb which in picturesque confusion are scattered by the side of this ancient road. It seemed to us a land of enchantment, and the classic and poetic enthusiasm of earlier days was more than awakened; but fancy what we came to at last—the wires and poles of the electric telegraph! an electric telegraph on the Appian Way!

On the following day—December 6th—our first visit was to the church of S. Clemente. This has always excited much interest, as being one of the most ancient and unaltered of Christian churches; but a new interest now attaches to it, from the recent discovery of a still more ancient church beneath it. According to church tradition, Clement, the third Bishop of Rome, erected an oratory in his own house on the Esquiline, and after the cessation of the Christian persecutions, this was enlarged and replaced by a basilica of considerable magnitude. It is the actual church in which Gregory the Great must have read his homilies, and to which St. Jerome refers. This church, however, had been long forgotten; but about twelve years ago, during the repairing of a convent adjoining S. Clemente,

a painted wall was found, 20 feet below the level of the church, and subsequent researches revealed the existence of a complete and extensive edifice buried in the earth. A most careful investigation was made, and this building was proved to be the original church of S. Clemente. The researches are still going on, and up to this time both aisles and a large portion of the nave, and two rows of columns have been cleared; and, strange to relate, even this lower church seems to have been built on pagan constructions of a still earlier date. It must have been a ruin at the time the upper one was built, and such is its antiquity that the only authentic record of it is, that 1200 years ago it was restored! In this underground temple we groped about in awe and wonder. The columns recently laid bare are of rich and rare marble; one is a magnificent specimen of "verde antique;" there are numerous paintings on the stuccoed walls, all clear and distinct, and of great interest, both as works of art and as elucidating church history. There is a Virgin and Child, and St. Catherine, and Christ giving the benediction, and the twelve Apostles. The most curious painting of all is a fragment consisting of the feet of a figure upside-down, supposed to be St. Peter on the cross, and St. Clement is represented saying Mass in vestments differing little from those in modern use. Inscriptions and carvings most interesting to the Christian archæologist also abound in this temple.

The crowning interest of all, however, centres in the revered dust this church entombs, for here, in the lower church, beneath the high altar of the upper, lie not

only the remains of the martyred St. Clement himself, but those of St. Ignatius, who died that dreadful death in the Coliseum. I could not but feel that the place was holy ground indeed. One may smile at the credulity, and be shocked at the superstition which can fall prostrate before holy handkerchiefs and miraculous pictures, but cold must be the heart and irreverent the nature of that man who can stand unmoved before a martyr's tomb, and feel that no sanctity surrounds the dust that it enshrines.

Equal in historical interest to this subterranean glimpse of the old world, and yet strangely contrasted with it, was the scene we were afterwards to witness. From the church of S. Clemente we drove to the Capitol. The day was exquisitely clear, and a perfect one for the ascent of the tower, from the summit of which the best view of Rome and its environs is to be obtained, but admission is most difficult to procure, an order being only obtainable from a senator. We found some favoured ecclesiastics were ascending, and though without orders ourselves, by a little management—the old, old story of the silver key—we contrived to join the party. Had the key been golden and jewelled it would have been worth the using. The panorama of mountains round me was almost as fine as the view of the Alps from the summit of Milan Cathedral; and what associations! There are the Sabine Hills, the highest peak being the Alban Mount, on which the Temple of Jupiter stood, now replaced by a convent of Passionist monks; there is the plain of Hannibal, the very site of his camp

during the siege of Rome; there is Palestrina, the frigidum Præneste of Horace; and there Tivoli, the ancient Tibur, surrounded by olive groves. The undulating campagna stretching north and south for 90 miles is dotted and pearled with villages and ruins replete with classic interest. The Tiber winds as a yellow line along the plain, marking the ancient boundary between Latium and Etruria. Immediately beneath you is the Forum, the heart of ancient Rome; there is the arch of Septimius Severus; there the ruined temple of Saturn, and the column of Phocas, and the remains of the temple of Jupiter, and the Via Sacra; and farther on you see the ruined palaces of the Cæsars, and the arch of Titus, and the temple of Venus, and, towering above them all, that king of ruins, the sublime yet terrible Coliseum. In a garden yonder you see the Tarpeian rock, from the precipice of which Cassius was hurled in full view of the Forum, and where, when Lars Porsena besieged Rome, Macaulay tells us "the Fathers of the City"—

> "Sat night and day to spy
> The line of blazing villages
> Red in the midnight sky."

And there, within a bow-shot, you see the ruined foundations of the Pons Sublicius, the very bridge that Horatius kept—

> "In the brave days of old."

And then you turn and look down on the ascent to the Capitol, and see the very spot where Julius Cæsar

was forbidden by the guard to pass, but who, though "his great heart brake" the while, grandly waved the soldier back and passed on. And there is the dome of the Pantheon, and the baths of Titus, and the ancient Lateran Basilica, and the column of Trajan, and the Pincian Hill, and there, beyond the Janiculum, are the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo; and, crowning all, the mighty dome of St. Peter's. The cypresses and olive-trees, the ruined aqueducts stretching their broken line into the purple distance, and the Roman villas dotting the nearer hills—all these make up a picture of exceeding beauty, of infinite variety, and of interest surely unrivalled in the world.

On descending from the tower, our next visit was to the Museum of the Capitol. This contains some of the most renowned statuary in the world. Here is the celebrated Venus of the Capitol, rivalling in beauty the Venus of Florence; the exquisite group of Cupid and Psyche; the sitting statue of Agrippina, renowned amongst artists for its drapery; the celebrated Faun found in Hadrian's Villa, and chiselled from that rare material *rosso antiquo;* the Antinōus, also found in Hadrian's Villa, a work of exceeding grace and beauty; and last and greatest of all, the Dying Gladiator. How can any poor words of mine convey even an idea of the matchless power and pathos of this work! Familiar as we were with its casts and copies, still the marble reality, time-stained though it is, came upon us as a surprise. Critics may be right in pronouncing it to be not a gladiator, but the dying figure of a Gaulish

herald, which they infer it to be from the cord round the neck, and the horn on the ground, but what of that? There it is, perfect in the symmetry of its proportions, a miracle of anatomical correctness, and in attitude the very poetry of expression; it is sensibility communicated to stone. Surely a tale was never more eloquently told by painter's brush or sculptor's chisel; the drooping head and the clotted hair, the knit brow, the despairing eye, the dilating nostril, and the quivering lip—all tell of the desperateness of the struggle, of the anguish of the defeat, and of fast-ebbing life, and yet such a vitality does there still seem to be in the supple limbs, that could you only stanch that gaping wound, you feel the man might spring to his feet, and again go fresh to the combat. This work is by none more eloquently described than by Lord Byron:—

"I see before me the gladiator lie;
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone
Ere ceased the inhuman shout that hailed the wretch who won.

"He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young Barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday."

My friend and I read these lines together, and, familiar

as they were, in the presence of the immortal work itself, their eloquence moved us to the core. It might be that we were thinking of our own "young barbarians" then far away, or it might be that we were simply touched by the pathos of the poem and the beauty of the marble, but when our eyes met we could scarcely see each other for the dimness that suffused them.

CHAPTER VII.

Library of the Vatican — Sketch of its contents — Church and Catacomb of St. Sebastian — General description of the Catacombs — Pagan and Christian epitaphs contrasted — Church of "Domine quo vadis?" — Tombs of Shelley and Keats — Keats' epitaph — Palace of the Cæsars — Christian bells and Pagan ruins.

OUR next visit was to the library of the Vatican, of the varied treasures of which a mere catalogue would fill a considerable volume. They consist not only of a magnificent collection of books and of the most valuable collection of manuscripts in the world, but of saintly relics, choice antiquities, and costly works of modern art. The scholar, the historian, the antiquarian, and the artist may alike banquet on the contents of these sumptuous galleries.

There are two principal chambers, one a magnificent room, 220 feet long, with an elaborately frescoed double-arched ceiling and polished marble floor; the length of the other is 1200 feet, or nearly a quarter of a mile. The manuscripts are in closed cabinets, and a stranger might walk through the entire suite of apartments without a suspicion of the literary treasures that surround him. A few of these may be enumerated. There is a Virgil of the fourth century, a Terence of the fourth century, and another of the ninth, with

miniatures. Here is Cicero's 'De Republica;' the celebrated Palimpsest to which I have before referred as having been discovered by Cardinal Mai under a version of St. Augustine's 'Commentaries,' in the library at Milan. Here also are letters of Henry VIII. to Anne Boleyn; the Dante of the fifteenth century; autographs of Tasso and Petrarch. Here, too, is the large Hebrew Bible, from the library of the Duke of Urbano, for which the Jews of Venice offered its weight in gold; and, most valuable of all, the celebrated Codex Vaticanus, or Bible of the fourth century, containing the oldest of the Septuagint versions of the Scriptures, and the oldest complete collection extant of the writings of the New Testament—this is believed to be one of the fifty copies procured at Alexandria by Eusebius, by order of Constantine, for the churches of Constantinople.

In the open cabinets, and on the walls and tables of the library, are articles of exquisite beauty and of profoundest interest. There are two magnificent Sèvres candelabra, presented by Napoleon I. to Pius VII.; a beautiful malachite vase, presented by the Emperor of Russia (not likely to be repeated, perhaps, after the recent correspondence between His Holiness and the Patriarch of the Eastern Church); a vase of Oriental alabaster, from the Pasha of Egypt; and a marvellously beautiful Sèvres vase, from Napoleon III.—presented on the occasion of the Prince Imperial's baptism, when it was used as a font, Pius IX. being the Prince's godfather.

The Christian antiquities are most interesting. There

are tables made of fragments of marble found in the Catacombs, and most touching relics of the early Christian life—lamps, personal ornaments, instruments for domestic use, gems, funeral decorations, and ancient glass used at funeral banquets. Besides this, you see instruments of torture employed against the early sufferers—pincers, iron whips, and a plumbatum, or copper ball filled with lead, and attached to a chain found in one of the martyr's tombs. Here also are frescoes from the Catacombs—one of the Last Supper, another of a dove with the olive-branch; the very ivory carvings on the shutters of the cabinets were found attached to the Christian sepulchres. In another part of the library, called the Museo Profano, there are Grecian and Roman antiquities, articles in bronze, ivory, and glass; you see the very nails, tiles, and other fragments that formed the framework of Cæsar's villa, and you are shown the hair of a young Roman lady, tastefully dressed, and with silver pins still remaining in its folds, found with her skeleton in a sarcophagus.

Such are a few of the varied and interesting contents, "things new and old," of the library of the Vatican. As you pace the floor, surrounded by these touching memorials, these gems of art, and these priceless ancient records, and mark that they are the contributions of twenty centuries—for the crumbling relics of the Cæsars lie side by side with mediæval remains, and with the Imperial gifts of yesterday—as you wander into the sculpture galleries, and there see the almost breathing statues, still so wonderfully fresh,

though the hands that wrought them have been mouldering in the dust for 2000 years; and when, turning from the galleries, you gaze upon the scene without, and see how the ruins of the long-vanished empire still rival in massiveness and seeming durability the structures of the living age, you feel as if the wave of time had been rolled back, and that the dead past had become one with the living present. It is this strange mingling of the old and new, this blending together of all the ages, that fills you with so indescribable an awe.

From the galleries of the Vatican we drove out to the church of S. Sebastiano, from which the Catacomb of that name is entered. A general preliminary word about the Catacombs may not be uninteresting. They were used by the early Christians as places of refuge from the storms of persecution that beat upon them, and which raged during the first three centuries, ceasing only on the conversion of Constantine to Christianity. They were used also as places of burial, the right of interment being denied to Christians during this period of trial, as well as the privilege of public worship. It is calculated that the entire length of these subterranean galleries is 585 miles, and that six million bodies must have been interred in them. They are excavated in the soft volcanic rock called "tufa," and one under the other cross and recross each other in a labyrinthine maze; they are about 8 feet high, and 3 or 4 feet wide, the roof slightly vaulted. In the sides are the "loculi," or graves, in tiers one over the other, and about 8 feet long. When undisturbed these graves

are found closed with marble slabs or tiles, on which inscriptions and Christian emblems are often cut or painted. Besides the "loculi," wide spaces, called "arcosolia," are frequent; these consist of a grave or a sarcophagus hollowed in the rock, and arched over. Still larger chambers also occur at intervals, including many "loculi" and "arcosolia;" these are family vaults and oratories. There are also crypts, or chapels of larger dimensions, for places of meeting and public worship. Those Catacombs which have been opened have been mostly despoiled of their contents, their inscriptions, sculptures, and crumbling relics having been taken to enrich the museums of the Lateran and the Vatican. Over the entrance to these various cemeteries, oratories and chapels were built when Christianity became tolerated, after the conversion of Constantine.

At the close of the epoch of persecution the Christians no longer used the Catacombs as residences, but a natural veneration being felt for the place so long associated with their struggling persecuted life, so sanctified by their suffering, and so dear to them as the resting-place of their departed brethren, the followers of Christ still met there to worship, and still used these galleries as their cherished place of sepulture. This will account for different classes of monuments having been found there—those of a plain and simple character marking the graves of the poor despised Christians who died before the "peace of the Church," those of a more decorative character afterwards introduced, and those raised to the memory of the martyrs.

The establishment of Christianity being followed by the irruptions of the barbarous hordes that overthrew ancient Rome, the graves of the Catacombs were ransacked in search of treasure; thus it is that they gradually became deserted, until in time all knowledge of their mysterious and interminable windings was lost, except to thieves, outlaws, and banditti. During the centuries of commotion and civil war that followed, even the entrances to the Catacombs were obscured by the falling in of the earth and the growth of trees and bushes, and some of them were walled up as a precaution against conspirators and robbers. Thus it was that for about 500 years these hallowed sepulchres seem to have passed from the memory of man. In the sixteenth century, however, interest was again awakened respecting them. In the time of Paul III. some of the Catacombs were opened, explored, and cleared of rubbish, and a controversy concerning relics having at that time arisen in the Church, much attention was drawn to the sacred contents of these re-discovered graves. Antiquarians, as well as ecclesiastics, eagerly pursued the new investigation. Bossio, an Italian, spent thirty years in exploring, and collecting, and copying. Two centuries after, another Italian, Baldetti, also spent thirty years in these underground investigations. Many others followed, and amongst them D'Agincourt, a Frenchman, who repaired to Rome to spend six months, and remained fifty years! All these explorers have written learned and voluminous works, the substance of which has been recently given us in our own

language by Dr. Maitland, in his interesting and most valuable work, 'The Church of the Catacombs.'

As a striking and irresistible testimony to the truth of Christian history, and therefore to that of Christianity itself, the Catacombs and their contents are of incalculable value; and in the contrast between the pagan and Christian religions exhibited in their inscriptions, they possess a peculiar and most touching interest. This is exemplified very beautifully in the view taken of death by the opposing philosophies. There is no one instance on record, notwithstanding the occasional dreams of heathen poets and the guesses of heathen philosophers, of any inscription on a pagan tombstone that speaks of a life beyond the grave.* All is hopelessness, repining, and despondency, and the Deity is often reproached in the wild language of blank and revengeful despair. One pagan inscription is—

"I, PROCOPE, LIFT UP MY HANDS AGAINST GOD, WHO SNATCHED ME AWAY INNOCENT."

Another—

"OH, RELENTLESS FORTUNE, WHO DELIGHTEST IN CRUEL DEATH, WHY IS MAXIMUS SO SUDDENLY SNATCHED FROM ME—HE WHO LATELY USED TO LIE JOYFUL ON MY BOSOM? THIS STONE NOW MARKS HIS TOMB. BEHOLD HIS MOTHER."

* In a work recently published, 'The Free Church of Ancient Christendom,' by Basil H. Cooper, B.A., the author states that he "has not lighted on a single clear example of the kind amongst the selection of upwards of 750 sepulchral marbles given in the work of

How different is the sweet trust and resignation expressed on the Christian's tomb! the language there is that of "the sure and certain hope;" of calm, and peace, and triumph. As has been well said, "turn where you will in the Catacombs, all is peace, peace, peace, everywhere." Here is a Christian inscription—

"IN THIS PLACE I LAY MY BONES: SPARE YOUR TEARS, DEAR HUSBAND AND DAUGHTERS, AND BELIEVE THAT IT IS FORBIDDEN TO WEEP FOR ONE WHO LIVES IN GOD."

Another—

"ALEXANDER IS NOT DEAD, BUT LIVES ABOVE THE STARS, AND HIS BODY RESTS IN THIS TOMB."

And another—

"NICEPHORUS, A SWEET SOUL IN REFRESHMENT."

Again—

"LAURENCE TO HIS SWEETEST SON SEVERUS, THE WELL-DESERVING, BORNE AWAY BY ANGELS."

In these evidences of the new light thus shed upon the mystery of the grave, how much is there strikingly to confirm and beautifully to illustrate the sweet Gospel story.

"When graves were dug men thought that all was o'er,
But life comes after death and not before."

This grand truth is revealed to us in the Scriptures

Zell, nor has he met with one such of undoubted and purely heathen origin in the only portion of Böckh's great work, the 'Corpus Inscriptionum Græcorum.' For an admirable summary of the history of the Catacombs, and their testimony to the truth of Christianity, I would also refer to 'The Contents and Teachings of the Catacombs at Rome,' by Benjamin Scott, F.R.A.S., a work to which I am indebted, amongst other matter, for the above inscriptions.

alone. Human affection has been the same in all ages. In the olden time Rachel mourned for her children as she mourns now; but not till Christ came and "brought life and immortality to light" has there been any record of human love hopefully and resignedly surrendering to death the cherished object of its regard. It has been the prerogative of Christianity to illumine the darkness of the tomb and by exhibiting a bright and blissful life beyond it, to rob the dark valley of its terrors; and even if it had wrought no other work than this, its mission surely might have been pronounced divine.

But I must now return to the church and catacombs of S. Sebastiano. In the church there is a most touching and exquisite monument to St. Sebastian by Antonio Georgetti; it represents the recumbent figure of the saint, pierced with arrows and breathing out his last breath—the sweet triumphant smile of martydom lighting up his face;—few sculptures have affected or impressed me more.

In this church the solemn and touching realities of Christian history are strangely and painfully blended with the puerilities of superstition; for in one of its chapels you are shown a marble slab, upon which our Saviour is said to have stood when he appeared to Peter on his apocryphal flight from Rome, and which is believed to retain the impression of our Saviour's feet. The tradition is that when Peter met our Lord, he addressed him with the inquiry, "Domine, quo vadis?" to which our Lord replied "Venio Romam iterum crucifigi," and a church is actually built on the

supposed spot, called the Church of "Domine, quo Vadis?" Now as marble was not, according to every authority, used in Peter's time as a material for road-paving, we must assume, if we accept the legend, that, just as in the miracle at Cana,

> "The modest water owned its God,
> And blushed itself to wine."

So here, on the Via Appia, the substance of the humble stone became transmuted by the touch of Deity into the more precious marble that we now see.

From the church of S. Sebastiano, provided with tapers and fittingly chaperoned by a hooded friar, we descended, through a low, dark doorway, into the Catacomb. Interesting and impressive to a degree was it to grope about in these subterranean abodes of death. On each rough wall of the dread and dreary galleries were the "tumuli," the shapeless shelves of earth, now empty, once the resting-places of the early sufferers. Here and there we saw the larger graves and the crypts where the hunted Christians met for secret worship, and where by the flickering light of our tapers we could make out the ruins of the rude altars and the remnants of the rude paintings. Rough and dangerous steps led us to still lower labyrinths of graves; and if we had cared to go on, we might have descended to lower still. There is no slight risk in these explorations, for strangers before now, wandering from their guides, have been lost in these dreary vaults, and never heard of afterwards. We occasionally came on a gallery walled up to prevent such catastrophes. Fragments of

grave-slabs were here and there discernible amongst the rubbish, but all was a mouldering confusion of dim vault and smoking taper, yawning tomb and dead men's dust. The smell was as of a charnel house, and a chill was on us, as if the cold wing of another world were flapping there. Our monkish guide, droning away about the long dead and gone, looked like the very genius of the place itself, and the air never seemed so fresh, or the light of heaven so welcome, as when we emerged. As we left the tombs the sun was shining gloriously, and we felt, and thanked God, that its free and all-embracing beams fitly symbolized the light and liberty of these Christian times.

On the following morning my friend and I drove out to the Protestant burial ground to see the graves of Shelley and Keats. Poor Shelley was drowned in the Bay of Spezzia; on recovering his body his friends Byron and Leigh Hunt burnt it; the fire did not consume the heart, and this it is that is here entombed —the inscription "Cor Cordium" refers to this. Poor Keats' tomb is a most sad one; no name on it, but this inscription—roughly and most unskilfully cut into the stone, as though by the hand of a journeyman mason—"Here lies all that was mortal of a young English poet, who, on his death-bed, in the bitterness of his soul at the malicious power of his enemies, desired these words to be engraven on his tombstone, 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.'"

It may be quite true that it was the expressed wish of the poor poet that no other inscription should mark his grave, but surely, after fifty years, this record of

literary persecution, and of the resentment of its dying victim might with propriety be removed. Can we believe that if his spirit now haunts that grave, it would not rejoice in the effacing of an epitaph which, in the unforgiveness it manifests, is almost a blot upon his fair Christian name? Poor "Adonais" told his devoted friend Severn shortly before his death, that "he thought the intensest pleasure he had received in life was in watching the growth of flowers," and he added, after lying peacefully for awhile, "I feel the flowers growing over me." They grow above him now: violet, and myrtle, and daisy are still blooming about his grave; and, in the words of poor Shelley, whose mouldering heart lies not far from his; "it makes one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." In Lord Houghton's life of Keats, a facsimile is given of the poet's handwriting, and the following exquisite verse is chosen:—

"Shed no tear, Oh, shed no tear,
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more, Oh, weep no more,
Young buds sleep in the root's white core;
Dry your eyes—Oh, dry your eyes,
For I am taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies."

What more touching or more expressive epitaph than this could be selected to replace that which now disfigures the tombstone? This suggestion is but the outgrowth of a thought that possessed my friend and myself while standing by the grave. Although we knew it all before, we could there realize more fully the sad story of this blighted life, and the inscription before us forbade us,

as we longed to do, to associate the revered name with Christian peace and forgiveness. From both Keats' and Shelley's graves we plucked some flowers, and musingly departed. The silence and seclusion of the spot, its classic surroundings, its home-like character, and its guardianship of these sacred relics of genius give this cemetery a touching and peculiar interest.

We then drove to the Palace of the Cæsars. It was a closed day, but a special letter of introduction to the director, Signor Rosa, procured us admission, and we had the ruins and a French guide all to ourselves. The entire property belongs to Napoleon III., who purchased it in 1861 for 10,000*l.*, for the purpose of excavating on a large scale, and the excavations are still going on. The buildings were commenced by Augustus, and subsequently enlarged by Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero; and they were repeatedly rebuilt and altered by succeeding emperors. In the eighth century they are said to have been nearly entire, although they began to fall into decay in the time of Theodoric. These palaces cover an immense space, and as they were the growth of many centuries their plan is most irregular, and the ruins are most shapeless and confused.

"Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heaped
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, columns strown
In fragments, choked-up vaults, and frescoes steep'd
In subterranean damps; where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that learning reap'd
From her research hath been, that these are walls.
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls."

I will not weary my readers by attempting any very particular description of these ruins. Halls of Justice, colonnades, banquet-halls, temples, baths, theatres are now only indicated by rent arches, broken columns, and fractured pavements, diversified by the luxuriant growth of ivy, cypress, laurel, and ilex. In wandering through them you see where frescoed walls are still being laid bare, revealing arabesque paintings and gilt stucco relief. But what interested us most was an arched chamber lately opened, the walls of which are covered with rough sketches and caricatures, the names and figures of men and animals, believed to be drawn by the old Prætorian Guard in their moments of idleness. Some of these are in Latin, some in Greek. Amongst the latter, one was found, and removed to the Museum of the Collegio Romano, representing the figure of an ass stretched upon the cross, with a kneeling figure before it, and the writing underneath was "Alexamenos worshipping his God." This is evidently a caricature of a Christian worshipper, and affords most singular and unexpected verification of the truth of the early records of our Christian faith. How little did the rude limner of this ribald sketch think that, eighteen centuries afterwards, his scoffing handiwork would be instrumental to the upholding of the religion he so derided and despised!

The soil of these ruins is full of small pieces of the richest and rarest marbles, showing the costliness of the original structures. This, indeed, is characteristic of all the ruins, both in Rome and in the Campagna, but particularly of those in the Palatine Hill. From the palace

of the Cæsars was procured a large part of the costly material of which St. Peter's was built. It is thus again that the old and new blend so strangely in this romantic city.

From one part of the garden of the palace, a favourite resort of the emperors, a particularly good view is obtained of the Capitoline Hill, and of the Forum, and of the city in general: and whilst we were here pondering on the scene, we were startled by a sudden bursting forth of countless peals of bells. It is the custom here to signalize all important occasions by setting every bell of every church in Rome (of which latter there are 365) ringing for one hour; and it was in honour of the great opening Council of to-morrow that this din was now made. The clamour of these Christian bells amidst the ruins of the Imperial palace was suggestive of many thoughts. They proceeded from the temples of a faith that, various though its forms may be, is now triumphant over the old idolatries. In the landcape before me, the tower of Christian fane made beautiful contrast with the ruin of pagan temple: the symbol of the cross everywhere surmounting the emblems of the old heathen worship. I thought of the days when, from the spot where I was standing, the bloody Nero and the monster Tiberius had witnessed and gloated over the cruel games in the Circus Maximus; when, in the temples the ruins of which encircled me, sacrificial rites had been offered to abominable divinities, the creation of man's unhallowed hands; and when in yonder terrible amphitheatre, men and women of my

own dear faith in hundreds were hounded to the death; and, remembering that beneath my feet the dust of imperial tyrant and of martyred saint, of the tortured and of the torturer, now mingled, I thought how fitting was the wreck and desolation of the scene; and still the bells clanged forth in ceaseless chorus, and, as I listened, I thought each had a voice, and that the long silent centuries had suddenly become vocal with a thousand tongues;—and what was their cry? "All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

CHAPTER VIII.

Walk to St. Peter's — Scenes in the cathedral — Statue of St. Peter — Procession of bishops — Ceremonies in the Council Chamber — The Council opened — Basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore—The Holy Culla — Churches of S. Prassede, S. Pudentiana, and S. Pietro in Vincoli — Statue of Moses — Church of Il Gesù.

If we may believe in atmospheric portents the celebrated 8th December, the day of the opening of the "First Council of the Vatican," dawned inauspiciously. It had rained incessantly all night, and when I rose at five the elements still seemed with all their might to protest against the gathering. Nevertheless soon after six o'clock my friend and I, vainly attempting to dodge the waterspouts and clear the gutters, were paddling our way through the narrow, dark, and drainless streets to St. Peter's. Even at that early hour all Rome seemed astir; a thousand church bells were jingling in honour of this great historic day, and carriages, flys, and hundreds upon hundreds of dripping pedestrians, were all pouring on, higgledy-piggledy, to the same goal. As Rome has no pavements except in the Corso—and even those are of the narrowest—on a busy day the chances are all in favour of your being knocked down, and it was no easy matter to keep clear of the rickety wheels churning up the mud and splashing wildly past us. I shall not soon forget that wretchedly wet and dreary, dark and dangerous walk; however we safely emerged from

the dark streets at last, and reached the bridge of St. Angelo.

It was a curious sight in the dim morning light. The Pope's dragoons, with their brass helmets, white cloaks, and black horses, lining the bridge and its approaches; the Pontifical oriflammes dripping on the castle walls; and a sea of bobbing umbrellas—through which emblazoned carriages, filled with scarlet and violet-clad ecclesiastics, were recklessly dashing—struggling on for the cathedral. Arrived there at last, profusely perspiring, and soaked to the skin, our work commenced; that work being to fight for a good place—to see the sight. Although we were early, thousands had arrived before us—some are said to have been there all night. After a struggle we managed to take up a position in the front of the line that was forming, and to *keep it throughout*—but it was tremendous work! In consequence of the rain, the route of the great procession had been curtailed; it could not pass out into the piazza, as originally intended, but entered direct into the grand vestibule from the Scala Regia, and thence into the cathedral, thus concentrating the crowd in St. Peter's,—and what a crowd it was! The most extraordinary gathering that perhaps the world ever witnessed; literally an *epitome of the human race;* every caste of feature, every shade of complexion, every degree of rank, every variety of dress; princes, peasants, soldiers, ecclesiastics, beggars, nobles; all combined in one mighty struggling mass. In the thought of all this, the gathering was sublime; but the heat, and

crush, and steam, and flavour of this sodden crowd are never to be forgotten.

Our place was immediately in front of the bronze statue of St. Peter. In honour of the event it had been dressed up; a huge triple crown sparkling with precious stones was on its head, the body was draped with a glittering cope of silver and gold, covering all but the raised right hand (upon a finger of which a monstrous jewelled episcopal ring was placed) and the shining black toe, which was still left uncovered for the salutations of devout lips. It looked like the wax-work figure of some gorgeous African potentate, and I could not but think how astounded the humble Galilæan fisherman would have been could he have seen himself thus transformed. It gave me ample material for curious meditation during those weary hours of waiting.

A broad line, as at a race-course, was kept down the centre of the cathedral by the Pontifical Zouaves, and who should be there—come over, doubtless, to see the sight—but our old friend, the dog of the Derby course! He seemed quite at home—trotted up and down for a while to see how matters were going on, and finally sat down immediately opposite to me, with an expression on his face as much as to say that he knew all about it, and that if I took *his* advice, I shouldn't back the favourite!

By-and-by a flourish of trumpets announced the arrival of the Palatine Guards, a handsomely-dressed regiment; they formed a second line with the Zouaves. After this came a body of belaced ecclesiastics, who scattered themselves down the cathedral in an inner

line. Some of these carried huge lighted tapers, others crucifixes; close to me were two of the latter, of richly chased gold, and of a size and weight that made the bearers stagger again. Just where we were standing there was a lane formed leading to the back of the Council Hall, and by which the august visitors passed to their galleries. We could see every one, and never before have I witnessed such a bewildering glitter of dresses and uniforms. The Diplomatic Corps, blossoming all over with medals and orders; chamberlains; court officials, in the old black-velvet dress of the fifteenth century; knights of Malta; officers of the Swiss Guard, in their splendid gilt and silver armour; Roman senators, in their flowing crimson robes; general officers; every conceivable kind of dress that a fancy ball costumier could suggest seemed to be here. It was as if Drury Lane had been ransacked: slashed doublets, cuirasses, velvets, frills, gold lace, silver lace, glittering helmets, plumes, scarlet robes, embroidery, all combined in one blaze of colour. The scene down the cathedral was strange indeed: lighted tapers guttered and golden crucifixes glittered amongst the plumes and halberds and bayonets; tinklings of bells in the side chapels and military words of command mingled with the din of the struggling crowd; and over all was the grand vault of the cathedral, more sublime perhaps in that dim morning light, than in the full flush of day; and around me towered the majestic statues, whose cold fixed gaze and stately calm and silence contrasted so strangely with the noise and hubbub at their feet.

At length the booming of cannon from St. Angelo announced the first movement of the procession; a last, long, hard, and desperate struggle for front places failed to displace *us;* we held our ground, and, jammed at last into one dense, solid, immovable block, the crowd awaited the procession's arrival. About half-past nine it entered the church; and for three-quarters of an hour it streamed slowly past us: it seemed interminable. First came detachments of ecclesiastics, in robes of scarlet and ermine; then the choir in purple and white, chanting the "Veni Creator Spiritus;" then followed some Roman prelates, with auditors of the Supreme Tribunal, and the Master of the Sacred Palace; then came the Pope's triple crown, sparkling with jewels, borne on a velvet cushion by a chamberlain and surrounded by a whole body-guard of civic and ecclesiastical functionaries; then came His Holiness's mitre, borne by another chamberlain, guarded and escorted in similar state; a prelate followed, officiating as thurifer with the censer, from which clouds of incense rose; and after him came the Apostolic Sub-Deacon in his sacred vestments of white and gold, walking between two other prelates bearing lighted tapers in golden candlesticks, and himself carrying His Holiness's cross. Then began the stream of Church dignitaries—the Fathers of the Council—abbots, bishops, archbishops, primates, and patriarchs. I defy any description to convey the full idea of this marvellous pageant, in its concentrated human, ecclesiastical, and historical interests; besides which it presented an unbroken succession of artistic studies. The gorgeous vestments of the

Eastern patriarchs vied in splendour with the rich robes of the North American prelates; and strikingly picturesque were the Ethiopian bishops,—with their swarthy complexions deepened into black by contrast with their dresses of white satin and silver—and the almost savages from South America, vested in copes on which pictures of saints were embroidered in panels, and looking most grotesque in their magnificence. Here was the Patriarch of Babylonia, here the Bishop of the Arctic Regions, there a Mexican prelate, and there a dusky Mongolian. Each had a mitre or a richly emblazoned coronet, in most cases carried by the attendant chaplain. The European dignitaries were less conspicuous than the Western and the Oriental, who were a blaze of gold and embroidery. Some of these men were marvellous artistic models, and might have walked out of Titian's canvas; in fact a complete living ethnological museum was here, and every variety of the human countenance seemed to be illustrated. Some, with coarse jaws and deep-set eyes, heavy brows and receding foreheads, looked dark, designing, and pitiless as demons; others were grand stately fellows, "princes to the manner born;" others again, calm, quiet, intellectual men, like Dr. Manning, the ruling spirits of this Council; and all here obedient to one call and rallying to the same standard, consecrated by the same vows and devoted to the same cause. Surely this Catholic Church is a stupendous power upon earth, and its organization something more than human.

Well, on they passed, flanked through their entire length by an escort of the Papal Guards, a good half-mile of mitred potentates—each in himself a personage

—till one's eyes wearied with the gazing. Then the cardinals swept past, a cloud of scarlet and lace, each with his attendant priest and trainbearer; then more helmets and cuirasses and uniforms and plumes, to herald the Roman Senators, in their long mantles of crimson and cloth of gold; after them, preceded by three cardinal deacons in their sacred vestments—the one in the centre carrying the Book of the Gospels—came the Vice-Chamberlain of the Church and Prince Orsini walking side by side; and last of all, surrounded by a flock of civic and municipal guards and a rustling cloud of court ecclesiastics, a kind old man, bareheaded, and on foot, slowly waving his right hand on one side and on the other, and dressed in a flowing robe of white satin and gold, that must have been very heavy to require such a number of attendants to assist him in holding it up!

Thus the procession passed on to the Council Chamber. The Fathers of the Council and the cardinals had all defiled into the great sanctuary, and taken their seats; but the Pope, before entering, knelt at the high altar, and made his silent devotions before the Blessed Sacrament, which was there exposed amidst the blaze of a thousand lights. At the altar in the Council Chamber His Holiness commenced High Mass by singing the Psalm at the beginning; after which it was celebrated by Cardinal Patrizzi, Bishop of Sabina; the Pope assisting at his throne. At the end of the Mass a richly gilt tabernacle was placed on the altar, containing the copy of the four Gospels. The Secretary of the Council—the Bishop of St. Hippolitus—was then solemnly con-

ducted, with uncovered head, to the altar, bearing the Codex of the four Gospels, which he reverently disposed upon the aforesaid tabernacle. Then Archbishop Passavalle, in cope and mitre, having first asked the Pope's blessing, delivered a Latin discourse. At its conclusion the Pope was attired in all the sacred vestments, and the whole mitred assembly, each in turn, performed the ceremony of homage and obedience, the cardinals kissing the hand of his Holiness, archbishops and bishops, his knee, and the other members of the Council, his foot. This long and tedious process completed, the greater litanies were sung by the choir—the whole assembly reverently kneeling—during which the Pontiff rose three times, and blessed the Council. Then the Pope delivered his Allocution, and once more intoned the Hymn of the Holy Ghost. Whilst this was being sung all who were not members or officials of the Council were conducted out of the Hall, and the great doors were closed. Then it was that the formal decrees were read, put to the vote, and passed. The doors were then re-opened; the Pope solemnly intoned a "Te Deum," which was sung by the choir and bishops alternately with magnificent effect;—and the first Council of the Vatican was opened.

Oh, how thankful I was to get into the open air! We were carried about by the crowd long after the procession ended; but before the close of the ceremonies in the Council Chamber we contrived to escape by a side door, just in time to see the Empress of Austria drive up; and, fagged, and stiff, and damp, and

mauled, and draggled, and dirty, we reached our hotel. We had had wonderful good fortune. Being in the foremost line of spectators, we had seen everything, the entire procession actually passing within arm's length of us; whereas, the cathedral being all on a dead level, thousands that morning saw nothing but plumes and halberds, mitres, crucifixes, and candles bobbing and flashing and twinkling over a sea of heads in the distance. Thousands too, I heard, were unable to get into the cathedral at all, amongst whom were even men who had been long resident in Rome and holding high official positions!

We had arranged to leave for Naples that evening, and had little strength to spare for anything after the fatigues and excitement of the morning, but we contrived nevertheless to visit some churches in the afternoon. First we went to the grand basilica of Sta. Maria Maggiore, where, on the Feast of Pentecost, the Pope celebrates High Mass, and in which Pius IX. has selected to be buried. In the subterranean chapel of this church there is preserved the holy "Culla." This is a relic held in very special veneration, and consists—as "the faithful" believe—of five boards of the real original manger. They are enclosed in an urn of silver and crystal, with a gilt figure of the Infant Jesus on the top. On Christmas Eve this "culla" is the object of a solemn ceremony. Surrounded by chanting priests and lighted tapers, it is carried in procession round the church, to the unbounded delight and rapture of the undoubting and adoring crowd.

The next church we visited was S. Prassede. In this church again your faith is severely taxed; for, in one of the chapels, you are shown a column of black and white marble to which our Saviour is believed to have been bound at his flagellation. We afterwards went to S. Pudentiana, supposed to be the oldest of all the Christian churches in Rome, and to occupy the site of the house of the Senator Pudens, where St. Peter is said to have lodged, and to have converted his daughters, Praxides and Pudentiana.

We then visited S. Pietro in Vincoli. For the devout the chief attraction here consists of the chains of St. Peter, but unbelievers are consoled by Michel Angelo's masterpiece, his colossal statue of Moses. The grandeur and majesty of this figure no words could describe. It represents Moses with the tables of the Law under his right arm, casting a reproachful look on the people, whose faith seems to be wavering. I cannot better illustrate the imposing and terribly life-like character of this marvellous figure, than by stating that, after gazing at it for a while, my friend and I both felt as if we could remain no longer in its majestic and awful presence, and we actually hurried away.

The history of this statue is interesting. It was intended to form part of the tomb of Julius II., that celebrated mausoleum which was never completed, but the plan of which was so imposing as to occasion the re-erection of the Cathedral of St. Peter's as its only fitting receptacle. Now here, the curious in tracing great events back to their remote causes may see the

first link in that chain of circumstances which precipitated the Reformation. The costliness of the building was such, that as the work proceeded the Pontifical treasury became exhausted, and to replenish its coffers the Sale of Indulgences was resorted to. The flagrancy of this device awakened the conscience of Luther and the Reformers, and thus the occasion of raising the most splendid monument to the Catholic Faith may in reality be said to have shaken the Church to its foundations.

The last church we visited was that of Il Gesù, the principal church of the Jesuits. This is the most richly-decorated of all the Roman churches, and is a marvel of painting and gilding. The magnificence of these temples is overpowering. There are scores of them here that would each make the reputation of a city, out of Italy. The wealth of gold and painting, sculpture and mosaic lavished upon them, almost passes belief. But, oh! why don't they do something — this paternal government—for the streets and houses? A little less gilding in some of the churches, and a little better paving and draining in the city; a little less devotion to ecclesiastical pageantry, a little less outlay on ecclesiastical frippery, and a little more attention to cleanliness and decency, would make Rome a much more habitable place; and I really think that He who bade us feed the hungry and clothe the naked, would be as well satisfied if, instead of enshrining the staves of His manger (even if we had them) in silver and in gold, something more were done for the wretched cripples and beggars swarming at the church doors!

CHAPTER IX.

Arrival in Naples — Cathedral of St. Januarius — The sacred bottles — The National Museum — The Pompeian collection — Papyri — Sammartino's Pietà — Sketches in Naples, and impressions of the people — Railway to Pompeii — The City of the Dead — Its history — Description of the ruins — Wickedness of the City.

LEAVING Rome Wednesday evening, December 8th, we reached Naples at eight o'clock on the following morning. It poured incessantly all night, but began to clear as we drove into the city, and turned out a magnificent day. Vesuvius was a most beautiful feature in the landscape, and as the crater was throwing off a much larger volume of smoke than usual, our first view of it was most memorable.

We had been accompanied from Rome by an Irish priest, who had come all the way from his mission in the Orkney Isles to the Council. He told us that the dream of his life had been to say Mass at the altar enshrining the blood of St. Januarius, the patron saint of Naples; so after a hasty breakfast we went off with him at once to the cathedral. My readers must by this time be weary of my description of churches, so I will only say that, in spite of my ravings about the ecclesiastical wonders of Rome, the Chapel of the Treasury, as it is called, in this cathedral, where the blood is said to be preserved, is the most costly thing that I had seen.

Besides its beautiful silver altar (which, after the service, was specially unveiled for our inspection), it contains forty-six silver statues, life size, and its marbles, alabasters, and mosaics, and the superb paintings over its altars and in its domed ceiling by Domenichino, Guido, and Spagnoletto, make an indescribably gorgeous interior.

It seemed odd to me when our travelling companion emerged from the sacristy vested in his priestly robes, and proceeded to the altar enshrining the sacred phials. The carpet-bag associations of an hour ago scarcely harmonized with the thought of the tremendous supernatural pretensions of the sacerdotal office and of the mystic and miraculous sacrifice about to be offered through our companion's manipulations.

The congregation consisted of my friend, our guide, the inevitable beggar or two, and myself. Before me was the world-renowned shrine of the saint, who is supposed to testify his pleasure or displeasure, and to bode good or evil to the State of Naples, by the degree of rapidity with which he allows his blood to liquefy. There, in that iron safe, behind the richly-chased silver altar, are kept the sacred bottles, which twice a year (in May and September) are solemnly brought out and shown to the adoring faithful. If the contents liquefy speedily, bells are rung and cannon are fired, and the whole city becomes jubilant and wild with delight. Whereas, if the liquefaction takes place slowly, it is thought that some dire calamity is impending, and the populace is seized with dismay. There are four locks to

the safe; the cardinal has the key of one, the bishop that of another, the chief magistrate another, and the commandant another. All must be present before access can be had to the miraculous relic, so that the parties to the imposition, if imposition it be, are many. What is to be said about it all? I will pass no judgment on the sincerity of the actual performers. It may or may not be that to admit honest men behind the scenes would be inconvenient; but I could have no earthly doubt as to the sincerity of the few worshippers before me, and of their entire acceptance of the truth and reality of the so-called miracle. As I sat quietly waiting for the completion of the short service, and listening to its dronings and tinklings, there was much around me to awaken reflection, and to perplex and baffle reason. The contrasts and incongruities were really oppressive. Close to me was a poor crawling, quavering bundle of rags, mumbling her inarticulate "Aves,"—evidently an *habituée* of the place, for she kept her eye on the door, and broke off to beg when any one entered the chapel likely to cast her a sou,—and yet, on and about that altar, within arm's reach of us, there was wealth that might ransom a kingdom. Around and above me, too, were artistic works of consummate taste and of unsurpassed execution, the productions of the loftiest genius, and the undoubted expression of the most reverent natures; and yet around what object was all this beauty gathered—what was the sacred treasure upon the shrine of which all this wealth was lavished? A couple of bottles containing a reddish substance, and believed, not only

by ignorant devotees, but actually by some whose candour, culture, and learning are undoubted, to be the still living blood of a poor mortal, who has been dead and buried these 1600 years! Surely, I thought, some one ought to weep here: should it be the sceptic for the believer, or the believer for the sceptic? I for those around me, or those around for me?

From the cathedral we went to the National Museum. In variety its contents surpass, and in beauty almost rival, the museums of Florence and the Vatican. Titian, Claude, Domenichino, Coreggio, are all well represented, and in statuary its galleries are singularly rich. Amongst its more remarkable contents are Ganymede and the Eagle, Psyche, the Farnese Minerva, and an entire Hall of Venuses. Its chief feature, however is the celebrated group of the Toro Farnese, which represents Zethus and Amphion tying Dirce by the hair of her head to the horns of a bull. Pliny describes this as one of the most remarkable monuments of antiquity. It was brought from Rhodes to Rome, and found, much injured, in the baths of Caracalla, whence, a hundred years ago, it was brought here.

The gallery of bronzes contains the most extensive collection of the kind in the world, and weeks might be spent in their examination. The Museum is also exceedingly rich in ancient glass, Etruscan vases, jewellery, coin, and pottery; in fact, there is no museum in any country that, in all respects, can be compared to that of Naples; but it was in the rooms that contained the Pompeian collection that we found the objects of

the greatest interest. As the excavations are still going on, they are adding to this every week. A superb gold chain, 3 yards long, a bracelet, and a silver flute, were brought in only a few days previously. You see here the very rings, ear-rings, and bracelets worn by the daughter of Diomede; cooking utensils, surgical instruments, charred loaves of bread, with the baker's name stamped on them; plums, walnuts, trussed ducks on spits, honey-combs; all reduced to charcoal, but perfect in form. Then again there are medicines, artists' colours, steel-yards, children's toys, and a play-bill, announcing the arrival of a troupe of gladiators! Such are a few of the objects in this weird collection. You are brought suddenly into actual contact with the every-day life of the old world, and almost tremble as you inspect the speaking relics—relics, too, of the reality of which you can here have no misgiving.

I must refer also to a most interesting collection of papyri, 1750 of which were discovered about 100 years ago in a villa of Herculaneum. The scrolls are exactly like charcoal, and were found ranged in presses round the walls, and these led to the discovery of Greek and Latin words on the supposed pieces of charcoal. Seven inkstands, with a stylus in each case, were found in the same apartment. The process of unrolling these, invented by Padre Piazzi, while undoubtedly ingenious, is not a little tedious. They are suspended by silken cords, and gradually moistened by camel's hair brushes. Five hundred of them have already been unrolled and deciphered, and three volumes of their contents have been

published. They consist principally of treatises on the Epicurean philosophy, music, and rhetoric.

On leaving the Museum, we went to the church of Santa Maria della Pietà dei Sangri, to see—what no one visiting Naples should ever omit to see—Sammartino's celebrated veiled figure of the dead Christ; a work of marvellous beauty and power, and most touching in the history of its execution, blindness having attacked the young sculptor immediately on its completion; it was his first and last work.

On quitting this church, we drove down to the station to take train for Pompeii. The bay of Naples, as all the world knows, is very beautiful, and the upper part of the city very handsome; but all down by the quays, and the lower streets, the place is simply filthy: my visit has disenchanted me. The dirty lazzaroni, the rags and squalor of the people, the dens that are called shops, and the abominations displayed on stalls as food, and the *utter* absence of cleanliness and decency—all these make Naples, even in the memory, odorous and offensive. We visited the square and market-place of Masaniello, always associated in my mind with beauty, life, and colour; with the spangled dress, the graceful dance, and the sparkling song; and the descent from this operatic ideal to the dingy, dirty reality, was simply ludicrous.

But I was intensely interested in Naples. In spite of the rags of the lazzaroni, the rascals are so picturesque, and the grimy stalls are so quaint in form and ornament, and you see such strange things! There is

a letter-writer at work on his street table, dictated to by, perhaps, a fish-wife; there a lottery stall, with its tempting heap of coin; there a carver and gilder is at work on the pavement outside his shop; another man, also on the pavement, is decorating harness; and there a lot of fellows are going into fits of excitement over their fingers, which they seem to use as tongues; and there is so much life and animation and cheerfulness amidst all the filth and squalor, that you fancy, after all, cleanliness doesn't matter; but presently you see a street toilet—an old woman at a sort of tripe-stall, having her hair done, the grease being laid on thick by a neighbour who sells garlic—and ugh! you change your mind, and think that cleanliness, after all, *does* matter!

Arrived at the station, which is as dirty and offensive as the streets, we start for Pompeii. The Neapolitan suburb through which the railway passes is about the most wretched, dilapidated, foul, and poverty-stricken district that I ever saw. The contrast between the foreground, with its rubbish heaps, squalid inhabitants, and crumbling houses, and the exquisite distant landscape, was painfully striking. The railway skirts the sea, and the view of the beautiful bay on one side, and of Mount Vesuvius on the other, is enjoyed uninterruptedly throughout the run; but in the towns and seaports that you pass—Torre del Greco and Torre del Annunziata—dirt and dilapidation everywhere meet the eye. At the latter place, there is an extensive maccaroni manufactory, and it was by no means in-

viting to see the prepared flour lying out on sheets in the midst of the abominations of the public shore, to dry in the sun.

Arrived at the Pompeian station, we were appropriately met and greeted by an improvisatore with his guitar. The fellow was a genuine specimen, singing, playing, and acting gloriously. At the house adjoining the entrance to Pompeii there is a restaurant, where, on maccaroni, *vin* Vesuvius, and flies *ad libitum*, we lunched, and then entered the "City of the Dead."

When I left it three hours after, a life-long illusion had been dispelled—the Pompeii of my imagination was buried for ever. I thought the city was an excavation in a hollow. It is on a hill. I thought it was a sort of underground catacomb, here and there laid bare to the skies. It is a vast open city, with temples and theatres, and houses and streets, and squares and fountains. The latter are dry, and the streets deserted, and the houses empty; but silent, roofless, and desolate as the city is, it seems but yesterday that it teemed with life, and that to-morrow it might be peopled again.

Not much of the early history of Pompeii is known: it is first mentioned 310 B.C., and in A.D. 63 it was nearly destroyed by an earthquake, together with Herculaneum, the terrible effects of which are described by Seneca. In the ruins of the city even now may be traced the evidences of this earthquake, for you see where workmen were engaged in repairing the injury inflicted by it, at the time of the city's final destruction. It was on the 23rd of August, 79, that the first-recorded

paroxysm of Vesuvius occurred. Pliny the younger witnessed the eruption, and described it in two letters to Tacitus: it was not by lava, but by showers of stones, cinders, and mud, pouring down for more than a week, that the city was destroyed; and hence it is that so comparatively few bodies are found, most of the inhabitants having had time to escape. It is evident that the city was not covered to its present depth by one eruption; successive layers can be traced, and, whilst the upper are untouched, the lowest bears clear marks of having been disturbed. This manifestly shows that the inhabitants had returned to make excavations in search of their lost valuable property, and were again disturbed by another outbreak of the volcano.

The city was originally situated on the sea-shore, as is evident from shells and sea-sand being found on the slope next to the bay, and it is said that mooring rings for vessels have been discovered close to the ruins: by the gradual elevation of the coast, it is now some distance inland. The bed of ashes and stones covering Pompeii is from 12 to 14 feet deep; and beneath this the city remained buried for 1676 years; excavations not having been commenced until 1755.

The material with which Herculaneum was destroyed was originally identical with that which destroyed Pompeii, but it having been afterwards fused into a concrete mass by the action of streams of boiling water, and become hardened in the cooling, the attempt to exhume this city and its treasures has failed. The dusty pumice-stone material, however, entombing Pompeii is

still light and friable, and easily removed. The upper storeys of the buildings were probably composed of wood, and were either burned off, or forced in by the enormous weight of the overwhelming mass. With this exception, we see a beautiful and once flourishing city, just as it existed eighteen centuries ago. As yet, one-third only of the city has been exhumed; the excavations are carried on by Government, and no visitor is allowed to go over the city without a military guide. We had brought our own guide from Naples, but in spite of that, a soldier accompanied us closely the whole time of our inspection. This is doubtless a necessary precaution, as day by day articles of value are being discovered.

The bodies first found, were recovered in a very imperfect manner; but, a few years ago, a very ingenious plan was hit upon for securing them entire. A skeleton does not of course occupy the space of the original body, the flesh perishing off and leaving a hollow between the bones and their enveloping earth. When a workman finds that he has come to a hollow space, he reports to the authorities; a more careful examination is then made by means of minute probings and soundings; the uppermost part of the hollow space is determined, and then plaster of Paris is poured in till the hollow is filled; when this has solidified, the surrounding earth is removed, and there is the perfect form of the original man in the very attitude in which he was overtaken by his terrible death. One most touching figure I saw, evidently that of a young girl writhing in

the very agony in which she passed away. Her foot is lifted in pain, one hand presses a handkerchief to her head, and you can see that she was only covered by a thin night-dress, for the very texture of the material can be traced on the shoulder.

The first street that you enter is the Street of the Tombs, a part of the old Appian Way, and you are at once struck with the wonderful preservation of the pavement, and the seeming freshness of everything about you.

> "The shroud of years thrown back, thou dost revive
> Half dead, half buried—dead, yet still alive,
> Gathering the world around thee to admire
> Thy disinterment, and with hearts on fire
> To catch the form and fashion of the time
> When Pliny lived and thou wert in thy prime."

To pace the lone and silent streets, and to come everywhere upon evidences of a seemingly recent life, is startling in the extreme. You can still read the painted names of the long-dead residents on the door-posts. In that gateway the body of a sentinel was found at his post. There is the house of Diomede, with the colours on its frescoed walls still singularly fresh. There is the room where his daughter's skeleton was found, with her marriage ring fresh on her finger; and there is the dining-room where the wedding banquet might have been held; and where still you see the wine-cooler and the frescoed fruit. Here is the gateway near which the skeleton of Diomede himself was found, with a key in one hand and gold ornaments in another. In that street the charred corpse of a man was found in the

act of running away with gold. You see the house of Sallust, with a fine fresco of Diana and Actæon on its walls. You are shown a bakehouse and ovens where thirty loaves of bread were recently found, and a cellar containing "amphoræ," or wine-jars, stamped with the maker's name; some cracked and *mended.* In that house forty-six surgical instruments were found, showing an advanced state of medical science. In another, supposed to be the Custom-house, were discovered steelyards and weights; and in another, on a counter, evidently of an apothecary's shop, was found a box of pills, and by its side a small cylindrical roll waiting to be cut up. The public baths are shown you, with the marble steps as fresh as yesterday, and the well where the water was drawn, with the marks of the rope on the rim.

Signs outside the houses indicate the trades pursued therein. One represents two men carrying an amphora: this was evidently a wine-shop. And on another you see a painting of a boy mounted on the back of another boy, and undergoing the process of flagellation—unmistakeably a school—and showing that in those days, as well as in ours, there were thought to be various channels through which learning might be conveyed.

We visited the ampitheatre, some little distance from the city, and which at the time of the first outbreak is said to have been crowded with spectators. Returning to the city we saw the ruins of the Forum and of the Temple of Venus, and were shown the tribunal of the magistrates, with the judges' seats, and went down into

the prisons below. There is the Temple of Isis—one of the most perfect of ancient temples—and the secret stairs by which the priests ascended to deliver the oracle; and here also is a refectory, where men were dining at the moment the eruption commenced, and where chickens' bones, eggs, and earthen vessels were discovered. Burnt bread was also found here, together with the skeletons of priests, who had not time to escape. Near the remains of one lay an axe, from which it would appear that he had delayed his departure till the door was choked up with falling ashes, and so had attempted to force his way through the walls with a hatchet. He had already penetrated through two, but before he could break through the third, death arrested his flight. There, too, are the theatres, near one of which you are shown a place where a man was found in the stocks; and a marble slab, in process of polishing, is pointed out to you, the polishing of a part only of its surface being complete; and in the Forum you see an unfinished marble column which was being erected in place of another of "tufa," the mark of the chisel still perfectly distinct; and hinges are still to be seen on some of the door-posts; and the ruts are visible in the streets, and the stepping-stones for the crossings, and the worn footways—all can be traced, and you can scarcely believe that the trees and flowers around you are not identical with those blooming 1800 years ago; and might even fancy that the bird twittering over your head was carolling there before the sky became darkened by that cloud of death, and that it has just

flown back to look at the destruction from which it has itself escaped.

And all this while there is the beautiful mountain which committed this dreadful havoc. From time to time you look at it reproachfully. Volumes of white smoke still float from its summit, suggestive of the awful power of destruction it possesses; but it is calm and still, and, as it seems to you, strangely impenitent for the terrible deed; and yet why should it repent? Are there not now visible proofs of the wickedness of this city? And might not "the mountains rejoice, and the little hills be glad" at being the instruments of the vengeance of a righteous God? It is a solemn thing to visit Pompeii. I am not superstitious, but I could not spend a night in its lone and silent streets. Amidst the ruins of pagan Rome you are refreshed and comforted by the symbol of the Christian faith and the sweet sounds of Christian worship—to Catholic and Protestant alike welcome in their evidence of the triumph of the Cross—but here there is nothing but the dread and ghastly record of pagan wickedness and of the merciless destruction of its perpetrators.

CHAPTER X.

Return to Rome — Basilica of the Lateran — Table of the Last Supper — Corsini Chapel — Museum of the Lateran — The Scala Santa—Impressions as a Protestant—Martin Luther—Indulgences — Storey's studio — The Ghetto — Statue of Paschino.

WE returned to Rome that night, reaching it in time for breakfast, having seen Naples and Pompeii, and the beautiful bay and mountain to perfection, whereas all that day in Rome it had rained in torrents,—another instance of good fortune to match my memorable day at Milan. Nothing daunted by two nights of travel, we started off, after a brief rest, to the Basilica of the Lateran, "the mother and mistress of all the churches in the world"—as it is described in an inscription at the entrance. It certainly has peculiar claims to our veneration. In the fourth century the Lateran House was conferred by Constantine on the Bishop of Rome as his episcopal residence, and Constantine himself assisted in digging the foundations of the basilica, which he then founded. Five General Councils have been held in this church, known as the Councils of the Lateran, and its Chapter takes precedence of the Chapter of St. Peter's. The first ceremony observed by a new pope is that of taking possession of this basilica, and his coronation takes place

here, so that this church has preserved its rank and prestige for 1500 years. Altogether its historical associations are of the profoundest interest. My readers must be weary of my detailed descriptions of church architecture, so I will only say that this church is a mass of splendour. What, however, gives it a special claim on the affections of the faithful, is the belief that it contains the very table on which our Lord administered the Last Supper; another on which St. Peter often officiated in the house of Pudens; and the head of the apostle himself, together with that of the apostle Paul. These latter are preserved under the high altar, and on certain church festivals are exhibited, "with an accompaniment of very fine music," to the edification, delight, and rapture of the believing multitude.

The table of the Last Supper is of cedar, and was once encased in silver. It would be interesting and instructive to be informed how this table escaped destruction at the siege of Jerusalem, and survived a few other trifling historical perils and vicissitudes to which, in the course of 1800 years, it must have been subjected. Another curious question suggests itself. If stone, as being alone fitted for sacrificial rites, is the correct material for an altar, and therefore essential, as some contend, for Christian worship, how is it that this original table of the Last Supper and the table of St. Peter are both of wood? This, surely, is a fair question to ask, not simply of Roman Catholics, but of certain members of our own Church too. There is also another singular fact that may be referred to here,—when the

Pope receives the Holy Communion he sits, while others kneel; and when he celebrates Mass, he stands behind the table, facing the congregation, and not with his back to them. Surely in these customs, which are doubtless the traditions of the primitive Church, we may see clear and indisputable proof of the social character of the Lord's Supper. This point has been admirably taken up and discussed by the Dean of Westminster.

But we have not done with the marvels of the Lateran. In the cloisters there are shown two columns of Pilate's house; another column, said to have been split when the veil of the Temple was rent in twain; and the porphyry slab on which the soldiers cast lots for our Saviour's garment; so that altogether this church of the Lateran is a veritable enchanted castle, and, whilst exciting and inspiriting to lively imaginations, is a place of no small bewilderment to the understanding of the simple.

I must not, however, in the recollection of the Lateran marvels, forget to refer to the exquisite Corsini Chapel in this basilica. Besides marbles, alabaster, porphyry, paintings, gilding, and sculpture of the choicest kind, even gems and precious stones are used in the decoration of this sanctuary. The chapel, too, of the Tortonia family in this church is of almost equal richness and beauty. These two private families must have lavished fortune after fortune in the embellishment of these chapels; and thus it is that, in the course of ages, such treasures have been accumulated upon the shrines of this wonderful church of Rome. In a vault beneath

the Corsini Chapel is a Pietà by Montante, a marble group that no one visiting Rome should omit to see; a work of matchless pathos and the highest artistic merit.

From the basilica we proceeded to the Museum of the Lateran. This abounds in ancient sculptures, and contains most interesting Christian sarcophagi, all covered with bas-reliefs illustrative of Old Testament history, and showing the simple faith of the primitive Church. Here also are galleries containing Christian inscriptions and memorials from the Catacombs. The contents of this museum are of a curiously varied character. From the galleries in which are preserved the relics of the Christian martyrs, you enter the old state apartments, which contain a collection of pagan antiquities, and comprise the Hall of Mosaics, the huge floor of which is formed of the great mosaics of the Athletes, found in the Baths of Caracalla. But paganism is not allowed to have it all its own way; for, in the hall next to this, Christianity reasserts itself in the portrait, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of our own good and gracious Christian King—George IV.!!!

Our next visit was to the Scala Santa. These are the very marble stairs—as we are gravely assured—down which our Saviour walked when He left the judgment-seat. How they were preserved, and when, and by whom they were brought here, I cannot exactly discover; the belief of the Church is that they were miraculously transported; they formed, however, a feature of the Chapel and Triclinium of Leo III. in the Lateran Palace, and, escaping the fire by which this palace was

destroyed, they have been religiously treasured, and have a portico and a chapel all to themselves. They consist of twenty-eight marble steps, and are only allowed to be ascended by penitents on their knees. The Divine protection afforded them in their youth seems to have been withdrawn in their old age; for, just as if they were only common mortal steps, instead of being holy ones, they are so worn by the perpetual friction that they have had to be encased in wood, three times renewed, and it is on this covering, and not on the steps themselves, that the penitents ascend. Through slits in the risers, however, a sight of the sacred marble is vouchsafed. About every fourth or fifth step, there is a brass plate with a glass centre, through which dark stains are seen, believed to be the Saviour's blood. This plate the devout reverently kiss. For every step that is thus ascended you get nine years' indulgence, and plenary indulgence if you are active enough to reach the top. Now this is worth climbing for, and no wonder the stairs require their coverings to be so frequently renewed.

It was a strange and suggestive, ludicrous, and yet painful and depressing sight. There were reverend ecclesiastics, elderly ladies, beggars, and educated gentlemen, all shuffling up together. It looked like a game—a kind of race in sacks—and one insensibly picked out a penitent to back as the winner. Still, other thoughts and ideas prevailed. So totally alien was the proceeding to the teachings and associations of my life, and so impressed was I with a sense of its

utter and inconceivable folly and degradation, that I could rather have wept than laughed.

I wish to speak with every respect of those who are prompted to this act of devotion by feelings of genuine reverence, but, remembering the indulgence promised to the devotees, what can be thought of the motives of the majority?

For us Protestants, however, these stairs should have a special interest. Naturally provoking to ridicule as their superstitious associations must be, and as naturally exciting to sorrow, there is one episode in their history, the recollection of which should excite to thankfulness. It was here, whilst ascending these stairs, that Luther heard the voice that called him to the mighty work he was afterwards to accomplish.

D'Aubigné writes, "One day wishing to obtain an indulgence promised by the Pope to any one who should ascend, on his knees, what is called 'Pilate's Staircase,' the poor Saxon monk was slowly climbing those steps, which they told him had been miraculously transported from Jerusalem to Rome. But whilst he was going through this meritorious work, he thought he heard a voice like thunder speaking from the depth of his heart, 'The just shall live by faith.' These words resounded instantaneously and powerfully within him. He started up in terror on the steps up which he had been crawling; he was horrified at himself, and, struck with shame for the degradation to which superstition had debased him, he fled from the scene of his folly."

There are side-stairs by which the penitents walk

down, and by these I walked up. At the top is the chapel, called the "Sancta Sanctorum." This was formerly the private chapel of the popes, and it is considered the "holiest place in the world." You look at it through an iron grating. Amongst other relics and sacred treasures, it contains a portrait of our Saviour, who is represented as 5 feet 8 inches in height, and this is believed to be an exact likeness of our Lord at the age of twelve and to have been commenced by St. Luke and completed by a miraculous agency. It is quite astonishing what an industrious artist St. Luke must have been; though it *is* said by the irreverent and the unbelieving that all the pictures reputed to be from his prolific brush are nothing more than Byzantine works of the Middle Ages. I must not omit to say that a rattling money-box at the bottom of the steps and a ledge behind the grating at the top, where I saw a goodly number of coins, are provided for the offerings of the devout. It struck me, however, as rather hard upon the penitents that their pockets should be tasked as well as their knees; but then I must remember the nine times twenty-eight years of indulgence!

I do not wish to discuss this question of indulgences here, but some curious facts may be stated. It is really bewildering to think of the facilities afforded in Rome for procuring them. By visiting the church of Santa Croce, which is said to contain the largest piece of the true cross extant, together with the actual nails that pierced our Saviour's feet,—by visiting this church on the second Sunday in Advent you gain 11,000 years of

indulgence; and by visiting the church of SS. Cosmas and Damian, any day, 1000 years, and on the day of the "Station" 10,000 years. But the most singular of all the devices for this end that I know, is the case of the Virgin's slipper. The Hon. J. W. Percy, in his work on 'Romanism in Rome,' quoting from the Ursuline Manual, gives the authorized measure of the Virgin's foot, taken from her real shoe, on which is inscribed that Pope John XXII. conceded 300 years of indulgence to whomsoever should kiss this measure and recite three "Ave Marias;" this was confirmed by Pope Clement VIII., in 1603, and was extended to any similar measures taken from the original one, adding that it was also to be applicable to the souls in purgatory: so that, as has been ingeniously calculated and cleverly put by Dean Alford, "any devout Catholic, without stirring from his easy-chair, might, supposing three "Ave Marias" to occupy five minutes, gain in one hour of each day of his life 8400 years of indulgence, or, by this means alone, in each year upwards of 3,000,000 years."

A visit to Rome would not be complete without a glance at that modern artist life which forms so interesting a feature in Roman society; so, after leaving the Scala Santa, we descended from the world of, to me, figments and illusions, and visited the studio of Mr. Storey, the celebrated American sculptor. Who can wonder that so many of our great artists have selected Rome for their residence? Surrounded as they are by the immortal works of the giant geniuses of old, and breathing the very atmosphere of beauty,

they can here draw their inspirations, as it were, from the very fount of art itself. Our inspection of the beautiful and masterly works growing under the hands of the gifted sculptor of 'Cleopatra,' will not soon be forgotten. Here we saw a replica of that great work, as well as one of its companion masterpiece, 'The Sibyl,' which so captivated the art world in 1862. Who does not remember it—

> "With awful gaze of doom,
> O'er clenched hands her brooding visage bending?"

But we were chiefly interested in another work which Mr. Storey was engaged in modelling — the resting figure of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, who, by the witchery of her dancing, had obtained the Baptist's head from the "wine-flushed Tetrarch." This is an exquisite creation, and cannot but enhance the high reputation of the talented artist.

> "A shape of sensuous beauty I behold;
> Fair features rounded with the grace of youth;
> * * * * * *
>
> "A girlish form luxuriously endowed
> With charms that erst but ripen'd years could bring,
> As though the mellowing flush autumnal bowed
> With luscious fruit the budding sprays of spring."

My friend's muse was inspired by his admiration of this figure. For his charming poem, 'Salome,' we are indebted to this visit to Mr. Storey's studio.

We this day visited the Ghetto, the Jews' quarter. This is the Houndsditch of Rome—the same musty smell of cloth; the same close, dark, overcrowded little dens of shops; the same slop garments flapping about

outside, the same noses projecting into the streets, and the same shrewd black eyes peering from behind them; —what a strange mysterious history, even to the present time, is that of the chosen race! Formerly the Jews were the objects of a grinding persecution in the States of the Church, and, although in recent times their restrictions have been somewhat relaxed, they are still only tolerated in Rome, and confined to their own quarters. Some years ago they themselves were made to run in the Carnival races for the amusement of the Christian population, but this has been now commuted to a contribution, either in money or materials, to the Carnival prizes.

There is a curious institution in Rome, the statue of Paschino, which we did not omit to visit. This is an ancient torso, on a pedestal at the corner of the Piazza of that name, and it is from this we get the word "pasquinade." This mutilated fragment derives its modern name from a tailor, who, many centuries ago, kept a shop opposite, which was the rendezvous of all the gossips of the city. When any public matter called for sarcastic notice, or any public man had laid himself open to satirical criticism, this statue, by means of labels affixed to it, was made the vehicle of the witticism. Another statue, that of Marforio, near the arch of Septimius Severus, was used for replying to the attacks of Pasquin, and, until the former was removed, they kept up a constant fire of wit and repartee—these, in fact, constituted the free press of Rome, and even to this day the statue of Paschino is a terror to the authorities.

CHAPTER XI.

Pictures in the Vatican — Art and the Roman Church — Raphael's 'Transfiguration' — Extravagances of Mediæval art — The Pope at High Mass — Rome Pagan and Rome Christian — The Santissimo Bambino — Impressions of Roman worship — The Church and Christian antiquities.

As a fitting climax to our revellings in Italian art, we had reserved to the last our visit to the picture galleries of the Vatican. The paintings here are not numerous, but they comprise some of the grandest works ever produced; and where, if not at this heart and centre of Roman Catholicism, could they find a more fitting and natural home? Whatever may have been the attitude exhibited by the Catholic Church towards science and the cause of intellectual freedom, compelled by the sensuous character of her worship, she has ever been the very foster-mother and tender guardian of religious art. Not only to her are we mainly indebted for the preservation of the masterpieces of antiquity, but it was under the patronage of her pontiffs that the immortal works of the great artists of the middle ages were produced. If she has imprisoned her Galileos, she has almost canonized her Raphaels. How far, as is still the dream of enthusiasts, art, unaided by moral and intellectual training, has any inherent power to

ennoble a nation, is another and a larger question. I would merely say that if, even in its highest Christian development, it possesses this power, the population of this treasure-laden city should be models of every Christian grace and virtue. Let those familiar with the social and political life of modern Rome determine the question.

The grandest picture in the Vatican, if not in the world, is Raphael's 'Transfiguration.' Its subject is twofold, and yet there is a beautiful unity in its conception and story. In the upper part is the transfigured Saviour, with Moses and Elias, floating above the three glory-stricken disciples, and in the lower part is a group consisting of the demoniac boy brought by his appealing and distracted parents to the other disciples, who are pointing to our Lord as the only Saviour and Physician;—the picture should rather be called (as has been well suggested by Dean Alford), "Christ the Healer of Men." It is all rendered with intense power:—the glare of the demoniac's eyes; the eager, beseeching look of the agonized mother; the cheering, comforting, assuring expression of the disciples directing her to the Lord of life; the figure of our Lord himself, in whom all the interest of the twofold narrative centres; the spiritual lightness with which He floats above the earth; the ethereal beauty of His countenance, human in its sorrowfulness and sympathy, divine in its tenderness and pity; the expressive attitudes of the entranced disciples—all this, drawn and painted with the most consummate

skill, and suggesting so much of hope and comfort to poor suffering humanity, combines to make a picture of enthralling interest, and well pronounced to be "the masterpiece of all art." It was Raphael's last as well as greatest work, and, with traces of his brush still wet upon the canvas, it was suspended over his body when he lay in state, and was carried before it at his funeral. Beautiful and interesting is the thought, that when death summoned this gentle, gifted man to his account, he was engaged upon this noble pictorial homily —for if ever canvas was eloquent with Christian truth and comfort, it is this. Here there is no worship of the Virgin; no adoration of saints; all creature interposition between sinful, sorrowing man and Him who alone can heal and forgive, is distinctly condemned; and you feel that, matchless and marvellous as is the artistic merit of the work, its highest beauty and most entrancing interest consist in the sweet, simple, gospel story that it tells and the consoling truth that it preaches.

The painting in the Vatican that ranks next to the 'Transfiguration' is Domenichino's 'Communion of St. Jerome.' This is a majestic and masterly work, full of power and beauty; but, lacking the Christian simplicity and truthfulness of Raphael's masterpiece, it had for me a far inferior interest. This I may say of the majority of the other paintings. Executive perfection is not enough to immortalize a picture. Unless it either possesses the element of historical truth, delineates the beautiful, expresses some tender thought, or

illustrates some lofty principle, no work can permanently or universally attract. One wearies of the endless representations of saints, angels, and Madonnas, of annunciations, canonizations, miracles, and martyrdoms, which abound here, as in other galleries; and which moreover are not always of the highest artistic merit. Curiously grotesque are many of these compositions—such impossibilities of perspective—such exaggerated anatomy—such an astonishing development of muscle amongst the martyrs, and such an amount of drapery amongst the saints! As to the laws of gravitation, they are simply laughed at. There is generally as much business going on in the sky as on the ground; for cloud and *terra firma* seem to have been all the same to an Early Christian! If there be any special *rendezvous* for the sublime and the ridiculous, it assuredly is in mediæval Italian art.

On Sunday, the 12th, I was again early in St. Peter's, understanding that the Pope was to assist pontifically at High Mass, in the presence of upwards of 700 mitred bishops. The same motley crowd and theatrical crush as on the previous Sunday; the same incongruous gathering of priests, Swiss Guards, beggars, nobles, sketching artists, sight-seers, devotees, monks, sisters, tourists, and soldiers. Again in a front place, I saw it all perfectly. The Pope was on his throne of state in the tribune, surrounded by cardinals, Roman nobles, and a glitter of uniforms. Some preliminary ceremony respecting the proclamation of indulgences had to be gone through, and the strange and wonderful evolutions that were per-

formed about the old man!—taking off his mitre and putting it on again, incensing him, perpetually lighting and extinguishing and relighting candles about him, arranging his robes, folding them back to free his arms when he was wanted to bless, kneeling to him, falling prostrate at his feet—all most confusing and bewildering to my poor simple Protestant senses. I concluded, of course, that everything had some symbolic meaning, but nothing could possibly *look* more like the simple unmitigated adoration of a man; and as the Count de Montalembert hesitates not to reproach his co-religionists with their worship "of the idol at the Vatican," it may be assumed that my impressions were not without warrant.* This ceremony over, High Mass was celebrated with all its effective accompaniments of chanting and ritual. Just before the consecration of the elements, the Pope descended from his throne, and with a crowd of

* Since the above was written the Count de Montalembert has passed away; and it may not be inappropriate here to allude to his dying protest against the "lavish encouragement given under the Pontificate of Pius IX. to exaggerated doctrines, outraging the good sense as well as the honour of the human race." Referring to the supporters in the Council of the dogma of Personal Infallibility, he speaks of "the torrent of adulation, imposture, and servility by which we risk being swallowed up," and he further speaks of "the detestable political and religious aberrations which make up contemporary Ultramontanism." But perhaps the most striking passage from the pen of this gifted man and ardent Romanist is the following extract from a letter written in December last to an English friend:—"Temporal despotism has faded away in a most unexpected fashion, and I sincerely hope spiritual despotism will follow sooner or later. . . . I must content myself with standing true to my colours, and to the convictions of my youth: and that I do, being more convinced than ever that *freedom in the sphere of religion, still more than in that of politics, is the vital condition of truth.*"

attendants and train-bearers, marched down the broad green lane between the tiers of patriarchs and bishops to the high altar, and there all prostrated themselves during the elevation of the Host, the Swiss Guards and the whole assemblage of "the faithful" doing the same. And then His Holiness marched back again, and once more the candles were lit, and again the thurifers swung their censers, and divinest chantings again broke forth from the choir. His Holiness read the Gospel himself, and his full rich voice, for which he is remarkable, quite rang through the vast building. It was all very imposing, interesting and exciting, but as complete a show—at least to my thinking—as anything I ever saw. Opera-glasses, bayonets, sketchings, climbings up to look, strugglings for front places, rushings off to see the procession pass out;—all this is strange and foreign to our English ideas of worship, and I never more longed to join in our simple Protestant service, than when I made one of that crowd of sight-seers pouring out of magnificent St. Peter's.

On the evening of this day we left Rome—gaudy, dirty, mystic, superstitious, desolate, glorious Rome,—and so I will briefly sum up my impressions and recollections.

They are of the most complex and contradictory character, for I leave two Romes behind me, each distinct in memory. Of the one, I recall the majestic ruins of the earlier city, so grandly defiant of time in the slowness and seeming reluctance of their decay, and in their massiveness still so eloquent of the might of the

vanished empire; and other ruins of this ancient city I recall, speaking to me of a still mightier power—the power of that spiritual kingdom, before the light and influence of which the darkness of paganism fled. The other Rome that I leave is the Rome of the modern Catholic Church. Before my memory there still floats a confused vision of gaudy vestments, curling incense, pontifical thrones, and gilded shrines; glittering mitres, flickering tapers, chanting priests, and incomprehensible ceremonials; dressed-up dolls, holy handkerchiefs, and sacred stairs; frowsy friars, helmeted soldiers, odorous mendicants, and prostrate devotees; tinkling of bells, swinging of censers, waving of plumes, and struggling of crowds; glittering state and pageantry; squalid and whining beggary;—these constitute my recollections of that Church, the service and worship of which seem to make up the entire life of modern Rome.

Would that my impressions were of a happier character. In spite of the solemnity and magnificence of the Catholic ritual, not once did I feel inclined to worship. The ruins of the ancient city excited in me a far deeper sentiment of devotion than the shrines of the modern. The splendour of the pontifical court bewilders rather than impresses; there is so much that is seemingly tawdry and theatrical about its state and ceremonial, that you can scarcely believe the jewels to be genuine or the gold other than tinsel. Associated, too, with the gorgeous rites of the Roman Church, there is so much dirt and beggary, that its magnificence seems a mockery; and common sense is so constantly out-

raged by the extravagance of its supernatural claims, that you seem to move in a world of shadows and illusions, and begin to discredit the reality of everything around you.

There is an institution here, called the "Santissimo Bambino," or "holy doll." This is a (so called) miracle-working figure of the Infant Saviour, preserved in the church of Ara Cœli, and said to be carved by a pilgrim out of a tree growing on the Mount of Olives, and to be painted by St. Luke, who happened to catch the carver asleep over his work. It is pretended that this doll possesses the power of healing the sick, and, covered with jewels and precious stones, the offerings of the devout, it is taken about from house to house in a coach appropriated to its special use. It is in great request, and they say that at one time it took more fees than any physician in Rome.

Now one cannot but feel that there must be something hollow and false about everything connected with a system that can sanction and uphold such delusions as these, and that before the progress of modern thought and the light of advancing science, the mists of such darkness must flee; and yet, confronting one, is the remarkable and startling fact of this wonderful gathering from all the nations under heaven, and the earnestness and enthusiasm of those who compose it. In this mighty assemblage are men of profound learning and undoubted piety, to whom the fables and legends which we of the Reformed religion regard as the expiring relics of an old superstition, are deep and solemn

realities. Though it may be *our* belief that the Roman Church is corrupt to the core, and tottering to its fall, in theirs and in that of the millions whom they represent, it is imbued with an inextinguishable vitality,—it is still the only depository of sacred truth, and it speaks as with the voice of God himself.

Pondering the significance of these facts, might it not be well if some of us passed judgment on the members of this communion with less haste and flippancy, and condemned them with more toleration and diffidence. We may believe that in the Prophetical Scriptures we possess the key to the mysterious history of this Church, that her corruptions are there predicted and her doom foretold; but apart from such light of revelation, mere human wisdom is powerless to solve the strange and difficult problem she presents to us. To hear learned divines, accomplished scholars, intelligent, sensible gentlemen, express undoubting faith in legends and traditions which, as Protestants, we are accustomed to regard as the merest twaddle of nursery fables; to see them—at the same time that they disclaim the worship of any but the one true God—kissing the toes of statues; prostrating themselves before objects which we believe to be either the inventions of priestcraft or the mere creations of enthusiasm; crawling up steps on their knees, and going into ecstasies of devotion—as in the presence of a divinity—at the sight of a poor old man carried in a chair above their heads, and waving his feeble hands over them;—all this simply passes comprehension. To the unaccustomed eye

and untutored reason of an English Churchman, the practices and worship that he witnesses in Rome are neither more nor less than a most perplexing and bewildering enigma, and he can at last only take refuge in the conclusion that if those around him are not bereft of their senses he is bereft of his own! I am assuming the sincerity of the worshippers. I cannot have a moment's misgiving as to the earnestness of many,—some of whom I *know* to be amongst the best as well as the most gifted of humankind—and, moreover, I could not but be struck with the evident devotion of many a wrapt and silent worshipper in the quieter churches, and even at the side altars of the great show basilicas; but, whilst my visit to Rome has impressed me with a sense of the power and authority of the Roman Church, and engendered in me a fuller belief in the sincerity of her worshippers, I am constrained to repeat, that the fact of the existence of such a Church in these enlightened days is as unintelligible to me as ever. In no sense have I been captivated by her enchantments or attracted by her worship, and my amazement at the acceptance by educated men of her teachings and tenets has been in no sense lessened. There are, doubtless, hidden meanings in her complicated ritual, grand Christian truths underlying her symbolism, and imparting life and strength to many a simple believer: it is not in my inability to grasp and comprehend these that my difficulty lies. If my wonder has been freshly excited, it has not been by the mysticism of her services or the strangeness of many of her practices, but by the credulity of her

votaries and the increasing audacity of her pretensions. If my conscience has been shocked, it has not been by the seeming frivolity of her pageantry, but by the palpable delusions of her relic-worship and the extravagance of her abounding superstitions.

While, however, such are my impressions of the worship of the Church of Rome, I freely admit that in one essential particular she has laid all Christendom under the deepest obligations. It is to her sheltering care that we owe the preservation of the priceless relics of the early Church. In these days of scientific research, bold inquiry, and free thought, we need all the evidences that history and archæology can render as to the truth of Christianity—arguments drawn from the internal and experimental evidences of religion, are not now deemed sufficient to meet the attacks of the scientific sceptic—external evidences must be resorted to, and I cannot believe that in the wide world there will be found such striking and convincing proof of the realities of Christian history, and of the power of the Christian faith, as in Rome. After eighteen centuries the voices of the early witnesses to the truth still speak to us with an irresistible eloquence. From the tombs of the Catacombs, from the sculptures on the ancient Christian altars, and from the inscriptions on pagan structures themselves, they tell us of a faith in those distant days that baffled the might of an empire to overthrow—of a religion of self-denial and self-sacrifice, winning its way to almost universal acceptance in spite of the sword of tyrant, the sneer of philosopher, and the selfishness of human nature; of the

old idolatries surrendering, not to the power of the Christian sword, but to the sweet and silent influences of Christian character; all this is *proved* to us, not merely by philosophic induction and abstract reasoning, but by the actual, visible, tangible evidences of the stones and marbles around us. We seem to live with the early sufferers, and to realize their hunted, persecuted life; and, remembering what strength of faith was exhibited in those dark, trying days, well may we blush for the feebleness of our own. In the pagan and Christian antiquities of the city we can trace, as in letters of fire, the whole story of our divine religion. All is there, graven on those stones around us; its small but terrible beginnings; the heroism and sufferings of its martyrs; the persistent and gigantic efforts made to exterminate their faith; and then, in spite of the seeming hopelessness of resistance, the slow but steady growth of that faith, the overthrow of its pagan oppressors, and its eventual triumph. Let me take a doubter to the Catacombs, and let me there show him these graven evidences of the "sweet story of old," and then I would confidently ask him whether it is *conceivable* that a religion which has thus triumphed over every obstacle that the power, the interest, and the malice of man could devise, can be otherwise than divine! Any man may thank God for the strengthening of his faith, which cannot but result from a thoughtful visit to the Christian antiquities of Rome; and let him gratefully remember that to the protecting care of the Roman Church the preservation of these antiquities is due.

CHAPTER XII.

Arrival in Venice — Gondola traffic — History of the city — Piazza and Cathedral of St. Mark — Palace of the Doges — Bridge of Sighs — Dungeons — Tombs of Titian and Canova — The Academy — The Campanile — The Arsenal — Instruments of torture — The Grand Canal — General description and impressions.

LEAVING Rome on the evening of the 12th at half-past seven, I travelled right through to Venice, reaching it the next evening at half-past ten—a long tedious journey of twenty-seven hours, broken only by a two hours' rest at Florence. No rest, however, in one sense, for I hastened off immediately on my arrival, to see the Medici chapel and monuments, and Ghiberti's celebrated bronze gates. At Florence I parted with my companion, and proceeded alone.

The mountain scenery of the Apennines, through which the railway passes, is exceedingly beautiful, but the journey—like all Italian railway journeys—was very tedious; perhaps the more so from my impatience to arrive at my destination—the romantic City of the Sea, which it had been the dream of my life to visit.

Stepping out of the carriage on to an ordinary railway platform, and then going through the usual prosaic luggage and ticket routine was not a little dis-

enchanting; and the porter who shouldered my portmanteau looked so like other porters, particularly in the mercenary way in which he capped me, and devoted himself to my special interests, that I began to think it all a mistake; but when, instead of hailing a fly, the fellow deposited my traps in a veritable gondola, lying in a street of water, lapping the steps of the railway office, and motioned me to get in, I then knew it was all right; and closing my eyes, as it were, to the waking world, I abandoned myself to the romance of the dreamland upon which at last I had entered.

Strange, novel, quaint, curious, never-to-be-forgotten, impossible to describe, is the sensation of a first journey in a gondola through these mystic streets. So smooth is the rapid motion of the funereal-looking boat, and such is the deathlike stillness around you, broken only by the faint plash of the seemingly-muffled oar, and the low, wailing, warning cry of the gondolier about to turn a corner, that you might fancy yourself bound on some solemn secret errand in an abode of mutes; or, if romantically disposed, you might believe, as you silently float through those dumb streets, and look up at the high balconies of the barred houses under which you are so noiselessly and stealthily gliding, that you are a knight-errant bent on the rescue of endangered beauty, and expect to see the signal waving white in the moonlight. You are indulging, perhaps, in such fancies as these, when suddenly your phantom journey is over, and the gondola stops at some broad steps; a hotel porter whips out your portmanteau, and "mine host" of the

'Victoria' asks you in capital English if you would like some supper before the chambermaid brings you a light!

Nevertheless, it *is* Venice that you are in. Your hotel was formerly a palace, and the walls of the lofty chamber you sleep in might have rung to the revelry of the merchant kings. You open the high lattice window, and step on to a balcony; beneath you as well as above you are the stars, mirrored in the street of water; that black boat floating there is your gondola, and opposite to you, and almost within arm's reach, is a stately pile, linked to the palace you are in by an arched gallery, spanning the brief space. In spite of distant flitting movements, the flickering of far lights, and the passing of dusky shadows across the bridge, scarcely a sound falls on the ear; every footfall seems muffled, and a stillness pervades the scene, most strange and impressive:

> "All is gentle—naught
> Stirs rudely, but, congenial with the night,
> Whatever walks, is gliding like a spirit."

This night was soft, and balmy, and favourable to solemn and thoughtful musings. I lingered long over the scene from that window, and as the eye wandered down the vistas of water, and over the glimmering roofs, the romantic history of this fallen city passed as in a panorama before me. I thought of the far distant time when "the sea-bird's quiet reign" was first disturbed by fugitive bands, escaping to this cluster of

islands from the invading Goths, and pictured the slow development of the little settlement till, its independence being declared, the sea-girt village of refugees grew into a busy thriving centre of commerce, and, the rude hut giving place to the stately palace, this fair and beautiful city rose from out the main. How soon is the romantic story told! First, the establishment of the Republic, with its brave line of tribunes and doges, under whose rule her arts became the glory of Italy, and her merchants the wealthiest in the world; then the victories of her fleet, and its proud share in the Crusades; the extension of her sway to the Hellespont, her wars with the Saracens, and her siege of Constantinople; her conquest of the Morea, and her sovereignty of the Adriatic. Instructive is it to remember how her pride and increasing lust of empire became the sure presage of her decline, and to recall the terrible story of her dread Council of Ten, with its midnight tribunal, its torturings, and secret executions, so fitly followed by the decay of her commerce, the defeat of her arms, and her final fall—Heaven's just retribution for the crimes of her rulers, and the weakness and corruption of her people.

"Oh! fallen Venice, bridegroom of the sea,
City that wast an empire, host of kings;
Time was when haughty emperors bowed to thee,
And nations watched thy glance; thy whisperings
Sufficed to shake the world's tranquility.

* * * * *

Save beauty, all thy splendid gifts have fled,
And even that is now the beauty of the dead."

The reading of these lines from a cherished MS. poem* fitly closed my ponderings that memorable night.

When I sallied out early the next morning into St. Mark's Square, the heart and centre of Venice, my first thought was "how exactly like the photographs!" The watery traffic and the unwonted silence are the impressive novelties of the city; but there can be no place in the world where, thanks to pictorial illustration, a stranger will so instantly find himself at home as at Venice. Canaletti, Turner, and the modern photographer, have so familiarized us with its principal architectural features, that it will be idle to descant on them; and yet to stand for the first time on this spot, with the blue waters rippling against the quay, and the gondolas flitting past you, and to gather into one glance such a wealth and world of wonder, interest, and beauty as is afforded by the palace of the doges, the cathedral of St. Mark's, the Campanile, and the lion and statue-crowned columns; and to mark how curiously the Piazza, in its swarming modern life, contrasts with the sombre gloom and decay of the beautiful structures by which it is surrounded; to think of the scenes that have been here enacted, and the strange romantic history of every stone and marble around you —all this is an experience impossible to forget, and which it would almost argue an insensibility not to chronicle.

It is, indeed, a region of romance. A fleck on the marble at your feet marks the very spot where a pope

* By the Rev. Evan Daniel.

placed his foot upon the neck of an emperor. Between those columns the terrible executions of the bloody republic took place. From that balcony the wives of the doges witnessed the gorgeous ceremony of the marriage of the Adriatic. Those flagstaffs, in the day of the city's glory, bore the banners of Cyprus, Candia, and Morea, and that group of porphyry figures came from Acre 1000 years ago. You move but a few paces, and yonder is the façade of the Cathedral of S. Marco. The five gates of the lofty portico are of bronze, inlaid with silver and gold. On each side of their deep recesses are clustering columns of Greek, Arabian, and Saracenic architecture, the Syrian and Armenian inscriptions upon many of which attest their Oriental origin. The vaulted arches springing from those columns are a sheen of gold and mosaic. Over the principal porch are the far-famed bronze horses, of such antiquity that they are known to have adorned the triumphs of Nero and Trajan at Rome, whence they were conveyed by Constantine to Constantinople, and thence brought here as a conqueror's trophy. Above these horses is a balustraded gallery, with five deeply-recessed windows, surrounded by intricate and delicate tracery, and from the midst of which mosaics, in brilliant colours, representing the triumphs of the republic, stand out from a background of glittering gold. Above them is a gilded bas-relief of the winged lion on a ground of rich deep, star-spangled blue, and over all tower the mosque-like gilded cupolas, the whole forming a picture of architectural splendour that vividly

realizes to you the boundless resources and barbaric magnificence of the old Venetian republic. The gilding is faded, and age has dimmed and blurred the splendour of the structure, and subdued it with its mellowing tones; but not the less does it impress you as being the most sumptuous thing you ever saw.

From the vestibule, which is entirely covered with mosaics of Scripture history, you enter the cathedral. It is not a vast or imposing building, but you see nothing but what is costly. Round you are side chapels encrusted with mosaics and bas-reliefs, glistening with gold lamps and swinging silver censers, and dim with curling incense. The capitals of the columns, the Moorish arches, and the vaulted roofs are all gilded. The floor you tread on is a tesselation of agates, chalcedony, lazuli, jasper, and porphyry. Everything around you, indeed, that is not gold, silver, bronze, or mosaic, is of rare and precious marble. In spite, however, of all this costliness there is an air of gloom about the building. It is faded and dirty, and the dust lying thick upon its crowded dingy treasures, gives it something of the look of an old curiosity shop. The windows are small and deeply-stained, so that the interior is dark and dreamy. Time, too, has subdued and dimmed its colouring, and as the walls and columns are cracking, and the floor is sinking, and a general air of dilapidation pervades the building, you feel that not only has its glory departed, but that it can never return. The chanting of the solemn service for the dead, and the presence of a coffin clothed with its sable pall and surrounded with lighted

tapers and black-robed mourners, were in keeping with the thought of all this vanishing splendour; enough, however, of brightness and beauty remains to give you a vivid idea of the magnificence of the cathedral in the proud day of the republic's glory.

The contents are in keeping with the romance of the building, and, but for my recent familiarity with such marvels, would have not a little astounded me. Behind the high altar is said to be deposited the body of St. Mark, the patron saint of Venice. In the treasury is preserved his episcopal chair, and there, too, I was shown the actual marble slab on which John the Baptist was beheaded, and assured by my guide that those dark stains upon it were the Baptist's blood with which it was still saturated, and which at certain holy seasons oozed forth in drops upon the surface! And besides this I saw the identical slab of granite from Mount Horeb over which our Lord was transfigured! The cathedral, however, has other interests, for it contains the tomb of the celebrated Doge, Andrea Dandolo, the historian of Venice and the friend of Petrarch, and its font is supported on a pedestal sculptured by Phidias, and known to have been used as an altar of sacrifice to Neptune.

> "The base on which yon sacred basin stands
> Shone bright with Neptune's sacrificial fire
> Ere thou hadst risen above thy barren sands."

Thus history and fable, fact and superstition, make up the mingled interest of this gorgeous and romantic temple.

Leaving St. Mark's, I entered the palace of the doges.

You ascend the Giant Stairs flanked by the colossal statues of Mars and Neptune, and on the central landing you pause a while, for on this spot Marino Faliero was beheaded and the doges were crowned. At the head of these stairs, you see the slits in the walls through which the secret denunciations of innocent men were dropped, consigning them to death. Then, ascending the Golden Staircase, you enter the vast and gorgeous halls, and are dumb-stricken with the wealth of art around you. Paintings by Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto, and Palma literally form the walls and ceilings of chamber after chamber in this sumptuous building. The Salla Maggiore, the great council chamber, now the principal library, is 165 feet long and 85 feet broad, and covered with masterpieces:—one picture by Tintoretto, 'The Glory of Paradise,' occupies the whole of one side of the room. It was here that Othello is represented to have been tried, and there is the tribune from which you may imagine him to be addressing the "most potent, grave, and reverend seigneurs"—an association of all-absorbing interest.

But another and still deeper interest awaits you as you enter a room with simple wooden panels, and are told that this is the chamber where the dread "Council of Ten" held their midnight tribunal. You are shown the door through which the prisoners passed out to their doom—you follow them through a dim tortuous passage, across one short, bright, gallery, whence you look out through the iron bars on the sunny life of the busy waters, and you are told that you are on the

Bridge of Sighs, and that the look you have just given on the bright world without to them was a farewell look. You have your hand on the very door and bolt that closed behind them, as they were led to their black dungeon, and stand on the very stone where they were strangled, and mark with terror the dark mouldering arch through which the sack with its still warm and quivering burden was shot into the boat, to be carried out to its grave in the sea. You see the dungeon of the two Foscaris, and by a dim torch you see the cell where Marino Faliero was confined; and another, where a brave, true man was tortured for eight days before, in mercy, the human devils strangled him; and there is the hole through which, as in mockery, a hooded monk attended daily, if haply the terror-stricken victim might confess to deeds he never committed; and you come out at last into the free air and light of heaven, and thank God for the rotting and mouldering of the stones around you, and the silence and emptiness of the place.

From the palace I proceeded to visit some churches. The church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo is a pile of sculptured tombs, the burial-place of the doges. The church of the Jesuits is the richest I have seen in Italy for inlaid marble, and its high altar by Toretto, Canova's master, itself is worth a pilgrimage to see. A more interesting church still is that of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, containing superb monuments to Titian and Canova, who were both buried here. The touching story of Canova's monument is that he himself de-

signed it for the tomb of Titian, and, dying before he had completed it, it was finished by his pupils, and now marks and glorifies his own grave. It is a superb conception.

I then visited the Academy, and if dazzled and wonder-stricken by the paintings in the palace, here I marvelled even more. Since I left England I have been writing about art in an ascending scale, and here, in these galleries—where

> "Titian's gorgeous opulence
> Still sheds its beauty on the enamoured air,"

is the climax at last! I now understand Ruskin, and the ravings of Academicians about Venetian art. To select a few pictures, I would speak of the 'Assumption of the Virgin,' the 'St. John in the Desert,' and the 'Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple,' by Titian; and 'Christ in Levi's House,' by Paul Veronese. And yet it seems absurd to particularize. To give you an idea of the wealth of Venice in its pictures: there are seventy by Titian, seventy by Paul Veronese, and over one hundred by Tintoretto, besides gallery after gallery of other priceless gems. The Academy, besides its collection of pictures, contains some interesting sculpture, the 'Gladiators of Phidias' amongst other works; and in a porphyry vase in the central chamber is preserved the right hand of Canova, whose

> "Subtle touch could give
> The poet's dreams to stone, and make the marble live."

I may remark that one room is specially interesting, as

it contains Titian's first painting, when he was fourteen; his best, when he was forty-five; and his last, in his ninety-ninth year.

The remainder of this day was spent in visiting the various points of interest, taking a gondola from place to place.

> "Did'st ever see a gondola? For fear
> You should not, I'll describe it you exactly;
> 'Tis a long, covered boat, that's common here,
> Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly,
> Rowed by two rowers, each called 'gondolier,'
> It glides along the water looking blackly,
> Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
> Where none can make out what you say or do."

No description could be more exact than this of Byron's. I visited the Rialto, where Anthony spat on the Jew's gabardine, and entered Shylock's house, and was shown where Desdemona lived. You feel at home as you wander about these spots; they seem sacred and familiar to you as the scenes of your childhood. You fancy that the spirit of your immortal countryman pervades them, and that in all their interests and associations you have, as an Englishman, a natural birthright inheritance. I saw also Titian's house, and the palace of Marino Faliero, and the houses of the two Foscari, Lucrezia Borgia, and Pisani. In the old market-place you are shown a stone pillar on which the decrees of the Senate were announced, and before which the sentences were read—this is the old "Change," "where merchants most did congregate." I afterwards visited the oldest of the Campaniles, and the palace of the last doge; and then, abandoning my

gondola, I wandered about a while amongst the quaint, intricate lanes and alleys connecting the canals, inspecting some of the ingenious manufactures, and marking the strange life of the place; and finished the day by ascending the lofty Campanile of St. Marco, to see the sun set, and to muse over the sad dreamy story of the phantom city floating as on a mystic raft upon the shining waters at my feet.

On the following morning, after visiting the church of S. Zaccaria, one mass of paintings, and the Greek church, interesting from an exquisite glass mosaic of the 'Transfiguration,' I went to the Arsenal, and here the interest of the city seemed to culminate. Before its gates are two colossal lions of white marble, brought from the Piræus, and bearing inscriptions in an unknown tongue, attesting their vast antiquity: some suppose that they were sculptured to commemorate the battle of Marathon. As you inspect the contents of the Arsenal, you seem as in one view to read the story of the city's greatness and the city's fall. You are shown the standards taken from the Turks; the visor of Attala; the wooden carvings and figure-heads of the gilded galleys of the earliest doges; the very masts and oars and rigging used by them in the gorgeous ceremonial of the marriage of the Adriatic, and the actual ring employed in the mystic rite. Here are Damascus scimitars and muskets, and actual revolvers, rifle guns, and breech-loaders, many centuries old. You are shown the sword that beheaded Marino Faliero, and the very instruments of torture with which the Council of Ten

jagged and tore and maimed its victims—the screw, the necklace with its inside knives, the key that poisoned as it was grasped, the box that exploded as it was opened, and the helmet with a small trap in its cheek, through which the operating devil might listen for the maddened confession groaned out, whilst, through small openings in the crown, red-hot wires were burning their way through the skull. At the bottom of this helmet there was a small shelf cast, upon which the wretch might rest his arm as he listened. These are the kind of things that make a man shout for joy when, in coming out, he sees the Arsenal basins empty, and hears no noise in its workshops. The decay and rottenness around him seem a fit end to the terrible tale of this strange city.

I had time before leaving Venice to row out to the Island of St. George to see the Piazza, the Palace, the Campanile, and the cathedral of St. Mark from the best point. It was an exquisite day, and Venice must have looked her best. What that best is, let the brush of the painter and the pen of the poet describe. The mingled grace and massiveness of the Palace and Tower and Cathedral domes rising directly out of the water, the beautiful tone of colour over all, the picturesque outlines, and the sparkling life that animates the scene at this centre of the city, combine to form a picture perhaps unequalled in the world.

From here I rowed down the whole length of the Grand Canal. The rich and varied architecture of the buildings, once palaces, with which it is almost entirely lined; the still bright though fading colouring of their

frescoed walls and fantastic cornices; the picturesqueness of their trelliced balconies, from which scanty brambles of vine occasionally straggle down, growing out of you know not what; the broken roofs of these old palaces blending in beautiful artistic lines with the minarets and domes of the churches;—such are the materials which for centuries have afforded to the painter so inexhaustible a theme for his canvas. The broad marble steps of the houses leading to the canal are everywhere sentinelled by gaudily-painted posts rising out of the water, to many of which gondolas are moored; and other posts may be seen, to which glass cases are affixed, containing paintings or images of the Madonna. Down the narrow ways of water leading out of this canal, you have glimpses of flying bridges linking the houses, and beneath which gondolas are gliding; and such colour is there about the markets on the quays, where boats are loading and unloading, for gay flags are fluttering, and sailors, in yellow, blue, and scarlet, are flitting about amidst the masts and cordage. The varied life and interest of this bright watery thoroughfare, once witnessed, can never fade from the memory.

The traffic in Venice is entirely by water; marketing, shopping, visiting, all is by gondola. You have no use for your legs; it is a lame man's paradise, in which you wonder how a bootmaker can earn a living; a "constitutional" is an impossibility; you can only, as it were, walk on deck. Thousands here have lived and died without having seen a wood, or climbed a hill, or heard a bird sing, except in a cage, or seen a hedge or a farmyard,

or a horse,—except the bronze horses on St. Mark's, and which they doubtless believe to be as fabulous as the winged lion opposite.

There are private as well as public gondolas, ferried by liveried footmen (it was really refreshing to see Jeames doing some actual work), and gliding in and out amongst the rest of the traffic, jostling the meaner boats just as a carriage rolls about amongst the vans and carts in our streets,—and all so strangely hushed and silent! There is no "noise from the humming city" here, but all is as the dumb flitting shadows of a strange and romantic dream, to which alone the city can be compared.

But, with all its mystic beauty and abounding interest, Venice is a depressing place. You know that its glory is of the past, that its population is declining, and that its commerce is gone. In places its floors are sinking and cracking from the settlement and rotting away of the piles on which it is built. All round the city the houses are peeling off from the wash of the water, and repairs seem never to be thought of. Many buildings exist but on props; towers are toppling over, and bridges crumbling; and there is slime and ooze about the base of everything—it is as if a canker had struck at the city's roots and were withering away its life. You do here and there see little plots of garden, the size of flower-beds, but these are often up amongst the roofs, as if to get out of the reach of the damp and slime below; in fact, everything seems to struggle upwards, as men take to the masts of a sinking ship; and really this is very much the impression with which I left Venice.

Rome you would expect to find as you left it last after the lapse of another thousand years—its ruins decay only as rocks decay; but Venice is as a house built upon the sands, and you feel that with all its priceless treasures, it may at any moment disappear from the sight, and sink into the sea from which it sprang, with the song of the sea-bird as its only requiem.

CHAPTER XIII.

Revisit to Milan — The Brera Gallery — Turin — More Church marvels — The Mont Cenis Railway — Crossing the Alps in winter — A snow cavalcade — Chambery — Dijon — Paris and home — Conclusion.

LINGERING a day at Milan, on my way from Venice to Turin, I revisited my first Italian love, the Cathedral. Ever since I had first seen it, I had been revelling in ecclesiastical art and architecture. Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice, had almost surfeited me with beauty, and I was curious to see whether Milan Cathedral would possess for me its first attractiveness: it passed the ordeal triumphantly. From St. Peter's at Rome, from the Cathedral at Florence, and from St. Mark's at Venice, you may still go direct to the Duomo at Milan, and feel that in some respects it surpasses them all. In gorgeousness and splendour, in richness of decoration, and in wealth of gilding, statuary, and painting, it may be far inferior to its Italian rivals; but in sublimity and beauty, and in all that excites solemn and devotional feeling, it is incomparably before them. There is no style of architecture for ecclesiastical purposes to approach the Gothic, of which Milan Cathedral is so choice and exquisite a specimen.

I visited the Brera gallery of paintings. Fresh from the Venetian galleries, I was in little mood to admire the collection, and the only paintings that I can remember as having attracted me, are 'St. Jerome in the Wilderness,' by Titian; 'Our Lord in the House of the Pharisee,' by Paul Veronese; and the celebrated 'Sposalizio,' or 'Marriage of the Virgin,' by Raphael. In wandering through the sculpture galleries, I was charmed to come upon an old friend—one doubtless well remembered by my readers—that exquisite figure of the 'Reading Girl,' by Magni, which was one of the great attractions of the International Exhibition in 1862.

In spite of rumours and warnings about snow stoppages and delays on Mont Cenis, and my recollection also of the escape that I had had a few weeks before, I resolved to return by this route, and by evening train on the 20th I proceeded to Turin. I could not cross the mountain until early the following morning, and therefore had a quiet day in the city.

Being no longer the capital of Italy, Turin is dull, and there is an air of desertedness about it; but after Milan, it is certainly the handsomest city in Italy. It is a city of arcades—something like our Chester—nearly every footway being under cover, the houses being built over the arcades. The churches are mean and uninteresting after Rome; nevertheless, they boast some treasures of the usual miraculous stamp. In the cathedral, for instance, there is the chapel of the "Santo Sudario," containing the holy shroud in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped our Lord's body. A dirty importunate touter,

one of half-a-dozen about the church, told me that there it was, behind that shrine, with the mark of our Lord's body still upon it. Was it not brought from Cyprus? and are there not certain seasons and festivals when it is exhibited by the good priest to the people? And then there is another church containing a miracle-working picture of the Virgin, engaged in the same lucrative occupation as the Bambino at Rome, and doubtless doing well, though, as they told me, its practice is not so good as it used to be before the "robber," Victor Emmanuel, began to spoil the churches.

In another church, erected to commemorate the event, called the church of the "Corpus Domini," there is a picture of a pious and sagacious Catholic donkey refusing to pass a church door, until relieved of the holy wafer, which a sacrilegious soldier had stolen, and concealed in his pannier. By the way, there is a church in Rome, the church of St. Antonio Abate, which on its feast-day is resorted to by the peasantry to have their domestic animals blessed and sprinkled with holy water. It is, or was, the custom of all the postmasters of Rome to send their horses, mounted by their postilions in their smartest liveries, for the same purpose: perhaps it was by a similar sacred instrumentality that this good donkey at Turin was first seriously impressed.

The points I chiefly remember about Turin are its noisy sales in the open piazzas—where you can buy everything at the open stalls, from a tin-tack to a hearth-rug, from a comb to a walking-stick—the sale of lottery-tickets cried all about the streets, and the

pictorial enthusiasm displayed for the "robber" King, and Garibaldi.

On the following morning I was up before four, to start for the five o'clock train for Susa, whence the ascent of Mont Cenis commences. I was cold, fagged, and weary; the *pace* of the last few weeks, with their broken nights and busy whirling days, having at last told on me; and for my solace and encouragement, the first thing I heard after leaving the hotel was that the mountain was impassable, a "tournade" on the summit having snowed up the railway the evening before; however I would not be disheartened by the rumour, but started for Susa, an hour and a half distant. Arrived there I heard the worst: the train had been detained for the night on the mountain, but the road was being cleared, and we could commence the ascent in an hour. The morning had dawned with the promise of a bright day; and having cheered myself with some breakfast, and furthermore having met with a pleasant party of English people—determined, like myself, to risk the pass—I took heart.

By eight o'clock we were off, and almost instantly began to mount. It is a single line of rails, and the carriages are small and narrow, and arranged like omnibuses, to hold twelve, face to face; a centre rail, grasped by horizontal wheels, serves for the grip of the engine, and the break of the carriages. Up we went, until we soon reached the snow. A splendid sunrise made the mountains glow again as we wound round that thin narrow ledge of rails cut out of the side of the

almost vertical rock. The precipices, within a few inches of which you run, are fearful; and you cannot look up at the zigzag road, climbing as it were into the sky above you, without dismay. At one part, by way of reassuring us, we were shown the wreck (half-covered by a snow-drift) of an engine and three luggage vans, that had toppled over and over into the valley a few days before, killing all its human freight. It was a sensation! Up you curl, however, heedless of all this; rounding abrupt corners and burrowing rocks, and skirting precipices, and thundering through galleries, roofed over as a protection from avalanches, until at last—having so often passed safely on where destruction seemed inevitable and instant—you become confident, and fancy that you are being wound up into the eternal snows by some supernatural agency.

The scene was very grand—had I not the icy glories of the Splügen Pass fresh in my memory, I should have been more impressed; still, all the sublime features of a winter Alpine landscape were there, and weariness and discomfort were all forgotten in the amazing beauty of the glistening mountains above and the wooded gorges below. There is no *romance* in it; you are in an *omnibus*, and the snort of the ugly engine struggling up the steep seems an intrusion, and is destructive of all poetry; but the novelty and excitement of the whole thing are beyond description. Well, up we went; the snow getting deeper and deeper—in some places there were drifts the depth of a house, the grey stony roof of a hut occasionally just showing above the snow—and a

keen wind began to blow, so that every peak and summit seemed to smoke, the snow feathering off them in clouds. At last the engine snorted out a final grunt, and gave in close to a dreary, dirty stone building, more hovel than anything else, where we had to turn out, luggage and all, to be transferred to sleighs. This was a long and tedious detention; for these mountain bandit porters shout too much for work, and exhaust themselves prematurely in gesticulation. Here we found the travellers who had been kept on the mountain all night waiting for our train to take them down to Susa; and what a miserable group they looked! They ought to have been in Turin hours ago, and instead had had to spend the night huddled together in that cold, comfortless place.

We started at length, a long cavalcade, and the struggling and screaming and floundering, and sticking and digging out again, and bumping and snapping of harness, and cracking of whips and tumblings of horses, and general hullaballooing of the next few hours, as we dragged and ploughed our way over that road of snow, I shall never forget. There is a long plateau on the top that had been choked up with a snow-storm the day before; the railroad was quite buried, but they had managed to cut a rough way through the old sleigh-road, and along this for hours we struggled. The views of the snow-world around me were magnificent; it was a marvellously bright and glittering day, and, whether it is characteristic of the skies in these regions, or was something peculiar to the day, I know not, but at mid-

day there were gorgeous colours beneath and about the sun, just as in a glowing sunset. Well, the struggle was over at last, and the smoking, panting cattle (twice relieved) came to a stand where the down-train was waiting. How I envied them their warmth; for my feet were frozen, the sleigh having been considerately provided with three or four inches of snow for a mat! We had again a long detention in shifting the luggage back to the train, and then the descent commenced. This was even more frightful than the ascent; but we had become accustomed to the seeming danger by this time, and were only too thankful to have safely passed the summit, and to have no further snow obstacles in the way. When we reached St. Michel, the train that we ought to have caught and the train after that had long departed, and we could get no farther that night than Chambery, which we reached at eleven o'clock; and where I was thankful indeed to rest after nineteen hours of such hard and anxious travelling.

Pleasant Chambery! I shall not forget my quiet Sunday morning there, and my long stroll out into the country roads. The town is surrounded by most lovely hills, backed by the eternal snows of the Savoy mountains. It is a favourite resort of wealthy French families, whose comfortable-looking villas, dotting the landscape, give a home-like aspect to the place, which was most welcome to me. The day seemed fitly observed; most of the shops were closed, and the people in their clean clothes—family groups and schools

—were enjoying the afternoon sun in the parks and avenues after their morning mass. I shall have a charming recollection of Chambery, in spite of a peep, just as I was leaving, that Sunday evening, into the restaurant close to the hotel, where I saw a couple of diminutive soldiers, all belt, bayonet and gaiter, playing cards; but then, perhaps, the stake was only the value of the two glasses of *eau sucré* that they were drinking, and they may have been on duty all night, and in need of some diversion medicinally!

That night I went to Dijon, and slept there, proceeding in the morning to Paris, but not before I had strolled through its quaint streets and visited the old Cathedral—my last visit to a continental Catholic church —and of which I have a confused recollection of spangled Madonnas, limp crumpled muslin flowers, damp smells, cobwebs, dust, tin canisters, beggars, scriptural daubs and ugly monuments—so painfully contrasting with the artistic beauty and magnificence of the church interiors of Italy.

A day's rest in Paris, just to collect my thoughts, and to subside into practical and every-day life, prepared me for my arrival home, which I reached on Wednesday evening, Dec. 22, just four weeks from the time of my leaving it.

Such then is my simple narrative of this very memorable journey, and gratified shall I be if, by showing what can be accomplished in so short a time, these

pages prove either an assistance or an encouragement to others in need of similar relaxation.

In the compass of one short month it was my favoured lot, without accident or hindrance, and in defiance of winter snows, to cross and recross the Alpine barrier, and to traverse the classic land throughout its breadth and length. In this period I visited its most renowned cities and most romantic spots, wandered entranced through its art galleries, meditated in its majestic temples, and mused amidst its ruins.

Fraught with delight and refreshment must such a journey ever be to the wearied body and jaded spirit; and who, moreover, can break away from the routine of home and mingle with the broader life circling beyond his horizon, without his errors being corrected, his sympathies extended, and his views enlarged? Samuel Rogers says:—"Like a river that gathers, that refines, as it runs; like a spring that takes its course through some rich vein of mineral, we improve and imperceptibly; not in the head only, but in the heart. Our prejudices leave us one by one. Seas and mountains no longer are our boundaries. We learn to love and esteem and admire beyond them. Our benevolence extends itself with our knowledge."

And by foreign travel what treasures are accumulated in the storehouse of memory, what materials for thought and meditation are there laid up! Till now I never so completely realized the force of poor Keats' golden saying—

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

The scenes I have described I can distinctly and vividly recall in their minutest particulars. They are to me a still present reality, and a source of ever fresh delight.

I can still see the frozen cascades glittering above me on the stupendous walls of the Via Mala, and recall the lonely grandeur of the Splügen snows, and the golden flashes of the Como sunrise. I see before me the exquisite spires and the clustering statues of Milan Cathedral, and can still revel in the pictorial wealth of the Florentine galleries and the wondrous artistic treasures of the Vatican. I again stand beneath the gilded dome of St. Peter's, dumb-stricken with its splendour, and can again hear the resounding harmonies and recall the gorgeous ceremonials of Catholic worship. I once more wander, exultantly, amidst the ruins of the blood-stained Coliseum, and descend, tremblingly, into the dread and ghostly vaults of the Catacombs. Awe-stricken, I again pace the silent and forsaken streets of the City of the Dead, and mark the mocking loveliness of its fiery destroyer; and still is it mine to drink in the enchantments of Venetian art, and again to float over the waters of the phantom city, marvelling at the gorgeousness of her palaces, musing over the strangeness of her history, and mourning the sadness of her decay.

Such are the scenes that I can at will recall; such are the rich and varied stores that are now treasured up in the chambers of my memory, and from which, when

I care to wander back into the romantic past, I can freely and delightfully draw.

"And now farewell to Italy—perhaps
For ever—yet methinks I could not go,
I could not leave it, were it mine to say
'Farewell for ever' . . . .
. . . . Oft while I live,
Now once again in England, once again
In my own chimney nook, as night steals on,
With half-shut eyes reclining, oft, methinks
While the wind blusters and the drenching rain
Clatters without, shall I recall to mind
The scenes, occurrences I met with there,
And wander in Elysium."

THE END.

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